

*THE QUATRAINS OF 'OMAR
 KHEYYAM OF NISHAPOUR,
 NOW FIRST COMPLETELY DONE INTO ENGLISH
 VERSE FROM THE PERSIAN, IN ACCORDANCE
 WITH THE ORIGINAL FORMS, WITH A BIO-
 GRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL INTRODUCTION, BY
 JOHN PAYNE, AUTHOR OF "THE MASQUE
 OF SHADOWS AND OTHER POEMS," &c., &c.,
 AND TRANSLATOR OF "THE BOOK OF THE
 THOUSAND NIGHTS AND ONE NIGHT," &c., &c.*

*LONDON: MDCCCXCVIII: PRINTED FOR THE VILLON SOCIETY
 BY PRIVATE SUBSCRIPTION AND FOR PRIVATE
 CIRCULATION ONLY.*

COPYRIGHT IN THE UNITED STATES,

1898,

BY JOHN PAYNE.

TO
MY FRIEND
YACoub ARTIN PASHA.

OMAR KHEYYAM.

*O thou, the Orient morning's nightingale,
That, from the darkness of the Long Ago,
Thy note of unpropitious woe
Cast'st out upon the Time-traversing gale,
—Its burden still Life's lamentable tale,
Too late come hither and too soon to go,
Whence brought and whither bounden none doth know
Nor why thrust forth into this world of wail,—
We, thy sad brethren of the Western lands,
SONS OF THE SECRET of this latter day,
We, who have sailed with thee the sea of tears,
Have trod with thee the BLOOD-DEVOURING WAY,¹
We, thy soul's mates, with thee join hearts and hands
Across the abysses of eight hundred years.*

¹ v. Quatrain 549.

INTRODUCTION.

INTRODUCTION.

I.

THE city of Nishapour, in the north of Khorasan, at present a collection of poor-looking houses built of unburnt bricks and standing in the midst of ruins, said to cover a circuit of some twenty-five miles, contains few relics of its ancient splendour, beyond a couple of mosques and vast bazaars, now for the most part untenanted. The number of its inhabitants is variously stated at from 8,000 to 15,000. It stands in a level plain, nearly surrounded by mountains, and is encompassed by villages and gardens, filled with flourishing fruit-trees, up to a radius of nine or ten miles in every direction. The neighbourhood is extremely fertile, producing in particular exquisite fruits, and the soil is so rich that the mountains and hills are cultivated up to the very summit; the climate is said to be delicious, and on the whole the district is considered the pleasantest and most habitable part of Khorasan, although there is but the trace left of the magnificent irrigation works founded by Shahpour and his successors and the city itself has never recovered from the ravages of Gengis (*Chenghiz*) Khan and his Tartar hordes in the middle of the thirteenth century, when it was sacked and

burned and the inhabitants put to the sword or carried off into slavery. The mines in the adjacent hills, said to produce the finest turquoises in the world, are still worked, and the fact that the great caravan-route between India and Persia passes through Nishapour has no doubt operated to prevent the complete decay of the once flourishing town.

However, if we go back some eight or nine hundred years, to the eleventh century of our era, we find Nishapour at the zenith of its splendour and prosperity, under the beneficent and enlightened rule of the Seljouc Sultans of Persia. The capital of the great province of Khorasan, the "Stead of the Sun" (as Aboulfida interprets its name, *Khur-asan*), the focus of Persian culture and the central point of the world's intellectual activity,¹ rivalled only by the Khalifate of Cordova, at a time, coeval with the latter Saxon kings of England, when Europe was plunged in almost total intellectual darkness, it appears to have been the most important town of mediaeval Persia; and Oriental geographers, such as Nassir Khusrou, Ibn Haukel and Aboulfida, rank it as the third greatest city of the East, inferior only

¹ The great Persian historian Mirkhond (*Amir Khatwond*) says of Khorasan, "It is the very centre of the most cultivated, the most civilized, the pleasantest and the goodliest portion of the globe, the middle gem of the necklace of the world"; and all Oriental authorities upon the subject coincide in this estimate of the country which a speaker at the dinner of the Omar Khayyam Club on the 8th December, 1897, is reported to have described—with a levity which would be amusing, were it not lamentable as a typical instance of the modern passion for pronouncing upon matters of which one is entirely ignorant ("Few people know and fewer think; yet all will have opinions")—as "a half-barbarous province."

to such metropolitan towns as Baghdad and Cairo. The geographer Yacout el Himawi says that it was the most flourishing, the richest and the most populous city of the earth; that by its situation it was "the Vestibule of the Orient" and the rendezvous of all the caravans; and the Persian poets and prose-writers never tire of extolling the beauty of its climate and its environs. According to them, nothing can equal the freshness of its mornings, the perfume of its roses and the abundance of its crystalline waters. The poet Katibi describes himself as coming "like attar, from the Rose-land of Nishapour," which was, indeed, celebrated for its vast rose-gardens and the excellence of the otto distilled from their flowers; and another poet, the celebrated Enweri, declares that "if Paradise is to be found on the face of the earth, it is in Nishapour; if not there, it exists not." The *Nushet ul Mishtar*, a geographical dictionary or gazetteer of the twelfth century, speaks of the fields about the city as being covered with violets, jessamine,¹ iris and nenuphar; and other geographers tell us that, on entering the town, one smelt a delicious fragrance from the gardens and orchards which surrounded it. Beshshari calls the district of Nishapour a delectable one and says that its orchards and gardens produced dates, olives, almonds, lemons, oranges,

¹ The word here translated "jessamine" may (with perhaps more probability) be rendered "lily of the valley" or "white rose," in both of which senses it frequently occurs in Persian literature, although they are ignored by all dictionaries with which I am acquainted, except the *Elfas-i-Edwiya*, a *Materia Medica* of the seventeenth century, written by Hakim Nouredin Shirazi, physician to the great Shah Jehan. ² Syn. "lily."

walnuts, figs, jujube-plums, locust-beans, sugar-cane, lote-fruit, violets, jessamine and all manner of other fruits and flowers in profusion. A crowd of watercourses threaded the gardens without its walls, which are described as being so extensive and so continuous that one might travel for days in the shade of their trees. Ibn Haukel says that its suburbs were full of fountains, the water for which was conveyed to them by an underground stream, falling into cisterns and reservoirs without the town; and the adjacent gardens and meadows were irrigated by subterranean canals,¹ said to have been no less than twelve thousand in number, and by a system of wells, sunk at short intervals and communicating with each other, (the ruins of which are yet, as we learn from Sir John Malcolm and other travellers, to be seen in the neighbouring fields), as well as by a considerable stream, called the *Seca* or *Seghawer*, which supplied the neighbouring villages. "In all Khorasan," continues the Arabian geographer, "there is no place blest with a purer or more temperate air"; and, indeed, the climate of Nishapour is stated on all hands to have been delicious and its fertility amazing, it being particularly celebrated for its melons, said to be the finest in Persia. Cotton was largely grown in its neighbourhood and it was famous for its rope-works and its manufactories of caps, leather, silken and linen stuffs, which

¹ By "subterranean canals" we must doubtless understand irrigation channels (*ckenat*) sunk in the ground and lined with bricks or tiles, after the fashion of those still existing in the Generalife (Garden of the *Aarif* or Architect) at Grenada and other parts of the Alhambra.

(says Nassir Khusrou) were held in such esteem that they sent them to all parts of the world. A notable feature of the town was its vast bazaars, especially that for the sale of saddlery (always a favourite object of rich and artistic ornamentation with the natives of the East), and it is well known that the stamped and perfumed leathers of Khorasan vied with those of Cordova in the markets of the Middle Ages. The place is variously stated to have contained from two to four hundred thousand inhabitants and to have occupied a space of a parasang (about four miles) square, enclosed within strongly fortified walls, it being a frontier fortress and exposed to continually recurring attacks by the wild border tribes. It is said to have boasted eight great colleges, founded by the Abbaside Khalifs of Baghdad, (the nominal, more spiritual than temporal, suzerains of Khorasan), many mosques and thirteen libraries, (one of which, that of the Cathedral Mosque, is estimated to have possessed over five thousand volumes, a large number for those ante-typographical times), and was especially renowned for its *ulema* or "men of learning," a title which comprises theologians, grammarians, poets, mathematicians, historians and writers and lecturers upon every branch of literature and science, and particularly upon questions of divinity and Koranic exegesis, the exposition of the Traditions of the Prophet (the *Sunnah* or *Lex non scripta* of Islam) and the canons of the Mohammedan Law, long lists of whom, as natives or inhabitants of Nishapour and its district, are to be found in Persian works of geography and history.

Among the *ulema* of Nishapour in the first half of the eleventh century, one of the most illustrious was the Imam Muwaffic-ed-din, a famous expositor of the Koran and teacher of the Traditions and of Mohammedan jurisprudence. In the words of the *Wesaya* (*Wissaya*) or Last Words¹ of the famous Nizam ul Mulk, "The Imam Muwaffic of Nishapour was of the great doctors [of divinity] of Khorasan and much honoured and blessed;"² and it was a generally-received opinion that every youth who read the Koran and expounded the Traditions before him³ attained to fortune and prosperity." The Imam was then⁴ some eighty-five years old and was considered the great exemplar of the followers of the *Sunnah* or orthodox Muslims. Among his most promising pupils were three young men of equal age and talents: Hassan⁵ ibn Ali ibn Ishac Tousi, the son of a man of good family and a landed proprietor or country gentleman⁶ of Radhegan near Tous in Khorasan, afterwards famous under the title of NIZAM UL MULK; Ghiyatheddin ibn el Fethh Umer ibn Ibrahim el Kheyyami,⁷ better known as OMAR KHEYYAM; and Hassan⁸ ibn Ali ibn Sebbah⁹ er Razi, the son of a man of some position, but doubtful reputation,

¹ Pl. of *wasiyah*, testament. ² *Muleberrak*, i.e. (id.) of good auspice, fortunate for and bringing blessing to those who had to deal with him. ³ Or, as we should say, "at his feet," i.e. under his tuition. ⁴ i.e., at the time when Nizam ul Mulk came from Tous to Nishapour, apparently about A.D. 1038. ⁵ *Hassan*. ⁶ *Dikcan*, chief of a village or squire. ⁷ i.e., the Kheyyamite or member of the tribe or family of Kheyyam, the way in which he sets out his own name on the title-page of the algebraical work after referred to, showing that *Kheyyam* was a family name and not an appellation due to his having practised the trade of tent-making. ⁸ *Sabbah*.

and a native of Rei in Persian Irac, afterwards infamous, under the style of "OLD MAN OF THE MOUNTAIN,"¹ as the head of the sect of the Ismailians, otherwise the Heshshashiyeh or Hassaniyeh, of one of which two latter words the English name of "Assassins," applied to the murderous horde in question, is believed to be a corruption.² Omar Kheyyam, to give him his familiar name, was a native of Nishapour or of the homonyms district; but the two others had been sent to Nishapour especially to attend the courses of the renowned professor. Hassan Tousi (from whose Wesaya these particulars are gleaned) appears to have been the Imam's favourite pupil and quickly formed an intimacy with the two others, who were, he says, "endowed with excellence of understanding and strength of natural genius to the utmost of perfection." "Hassan es Sebbah and Omar Kheyyam," he continues, "clapped up a friendship with me; and whenas I used to come forth of the Imam's assembly," i.e. out of his public lecture-room, "they were wont to join themselves to my company, and we fell into the habit of rehearsing with one another the lecture we had just heard. One day the vile wretch," as he very justly calls Ibn Sebbah, "said to me and to Kheyyam: 'It is a matter of general notoriety that the pupils of Imam Muweffic [commonly] attain

¹ *Shaikh ul Jibal*, Chief of the Mountain, so called from the robber-cry which he contrived to establish in the mountains of Ghilan.

² According to Silvestre de Sacy, "Assassin" is a corruption of *Heshshak*, hashish-eater; but *quasars*, rather of *Heshshashkin*, the oblique plural of *Heshshak*, hashish-eater? Other authorities favour its derivation from the name, Hassaniyeh (*Hassaniyeh*), given to the sect from the name of the founder.

to fortune. Now there is no doubt that, if we do not all three attain thereto, one of us will assuredly do so; and that being the case, what manner condition and covenant is there between us?' Quoth we, 'Whatsoever thou commandest.'¹ And he: 'Then let us make a compact that whatsoever fortune may be vouchsafed unto any one of us shall be equally shared by him with the others and that the owner of the good shall give himself no preference [in the division].' 'So be it,' rejoined we; and a mutual compact to that effect was accordingly entered into between us." Hassan Tousi goes on to relate that he passed four years under the tuition of the Imam Muwefic-ed-din, at the end of which time, having, as we may conclude, perfected himself, not only in Koranic and Traditional exegesis and jurisprudence, but also in the other sciences and branches of learning and accomplishments comprised under the head of *Edeb*, or "Breeding," a word which includes all the parts of instruction necessary to the education of a gentleman and a man of the world,² he left

¹ i.e. "wilt." By the etiquette of Persian courtesy one does not say to a superior or equal, "what thou sayst or wilt, etc.," but "what thou commandest."

² I extract from the Introduction to Baron de Slane's admirable edition of Ibn Khellikan the following account of the course of study commonly pursued by the Mohammedan student: "The young student commenced his labours by learning by heart the Koran and as many of the Traditions as he could acquire at his native place; to which he joined some knowledge of grammar and poetry." For this, of course, a thorough mastery of the Arabic language was indispensable, which was accordingly the first requisite of a learned education, and another account of Nizam ul Mulk's life tells us that he possessed himself of the Arabic language before leaving Tous for Nishapour. "On attaining the age of from fourteen to sixteen he began his travels and

Nishapour and entered what we should call the Civil Service, in which he had a hereditary footing, his father being governor

visited the great cities, where he learned Traditions and received certificates of capacity from eminent Traditionists. He then followed the courses of lectures held in the mosques or the civil colleges, and in some cases attached himself to one of the professors and lived with him, not only as a pupil, but also as a menial servant." This latter case appears to have been that of Nizam ul Mulk, who says, "I passed four whole years in the service (*der khidmet*) of the Imam Muwaffic-ed-din." "He then learned by heart the approved works on the dogmas of religion and studied the commentaries thereon under his master's tuition; he acquired a correct knowledge of the different readings and orthodox interpretation of the Koran and studied ancient poetry, philology, grammar and rhetoric, with a view to the proper appreciation of the admirable style of the Holy Book." A particular study of jurisprudence and an acquaintance with logic and dialectics completed the obligatory education of the candidate for the academical degree, which was only to be obtained in the mosque-schools. "Having obtained from his professors the necessary certificates, the student found the career open to the places of *khatib* (preacher), *imam*, *mufiti* (doctor of law), *cadi* (magistrate) and professor. Mathematics, astronomy, medicine and metaphysics were excluded from the usual curriculum, even in the civil colleges," probably on account of their lack of necessary connection with the Koran, on which, as has been seen, the whole official system of education was founded, "and could only be learned of private masters." But the historian El Meccari tells us that in the mosques of Spain all the sciences were taught for payment, and this was probably also the case in Persia and other Muslim countries. "It may be remarked," says Baron de Slane, "that nearly all Muslim authors were either doctors of the law or had followed the course of study necessary to become such." "As to the line of study followed by those destined to fill places in the public administration," continues he, "the *khatib*," or scribe, i.e. civil servant, "should be not only, as the name implies, a good penman, but also a master of the beauties of the Arabic language, well acquainted with grammar and the writings of the poets, a skillful accountant and gifted with a capacity for business. Some *khatibs* were employed to draw up state papers; others to keep the public accounts and registers or to receive the revenues of the state; and every governor of a province had his *khatib*, whose duty it was to keep the correspondence and receive the taxes, etc., of the district."

of his native district of Radhegan. He appears to have betaken himself first to Transoxania and to have entered the service of the Gheznevide Sultan Maudoud (A.D. 1041-49), whom he served for some years in various capacities at Ghezne and Kabul. He then became secretary or minister of finance to Ali Ibn Shadan, Prince of Balkh; but, being dissatisfied with his treatment by the latter, he threw up his office and returned to Khorasan, which was then governed by the Seljouc prince Dawoud ibn Mikayil for his brother Tughrel Beg, the Tartar conqueror and first Seljouki Sultan of Persia. Dawoud received him with open arms and recognizing his eminent administrative faculties and his probity, gave him the sole charge of his son Alp Arslan, bidding the latter look upon him as a parent and disobey not his counsels. The young prince became greatly attached to his governor and on his succession, by the death (A.D. 1064) of his uncle Tughrel, to the throne of Persia, he appointed Hassan his chief Vizier or prime minister and confided to him the government of the empire, under the honorary style of Nizam¹ ul Mulk or Regulator of the Realm, by which he is historically known. The new vizier at once showed himself worthy of his master's confidence; during the twenty-eight years of his administration of the huge empire of the Seljouc Sultans, he evinced the highest qualities both as a governor and protector of the people and as a patron of the liberal arts, and all Oriental writers agree in styling him the greatest, wisest and most beneficent minister who ever

¹ *Nizam.*

appeared in the East, ranking him above even the heroic Barmecides, who seem to have been his great exemplars, inasmuch as Yehya ibn Khalid and his sons Fezl and Jaafer held the seals of office for seventeen years only, before they succumbed to the jealous rancour of Haroun er Reshid. (See my "Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night," vol. ix, pp. 337 et seqq.) He was especially devoted to the advancement of learning and literature and to the encouragement of men of talent and erudition and founded a number of colleges in Damascus, Baghdad, Nishapour and other principal towns. "He was the ornament of his age," writes Ibn Khellikan; and the poet El Bekri says: "Nizam ul Mulk was a precious pearl, fashioned of pure nobility by the Merciful One; nay, so goodly was it that the age knew not its worth and the Creator, jealous for its honour, returned it to the shell."

The first of the Nizam's former schoolfellows to recall himself to his remembrance was Omar Kheyyam, of whose life in the interim we have no record; but there is every reason to believe that he had passed it in quiet study and scientific and literary composition at Nishapour. The great Vizier received his old comrade with the utmost cordiality and remarking that a man of his merit ought to be attached to the service of the Sultan, offered, in accordance with the compact before mentioned, to recommend him to the latter's favour, so that he might, like himself, attain to a post of honour and confidence about the Royal person. But the Hakim¹ (as Nizam ul Mulk calls him,

¹ *Hekim*, philosopher, man of science, doctor or physician.

showing apparently that he had already acquired a reputation as a scientific and philosophical writer and teacher) declined his offer and replied that all he desired was to be allowed to live in a corner in the shadow of his friend's greatness and to devote himself to disseminating the benefits of science and praying for his (the Vizier's) long life and fortune ; and in this language he abode constant. "When," says the Nizam in the document from which I have already quoted, "I knew that he uttered without ceremony that which was in his heart, I appointed unto him every year, for his subsistence, twelve hundred mithcals of gold, charged upon the crown-lands (or revenues) of Nishapour ; whereupon he returned to his former way of life¹ [at his native city] and applied to perfecting himself in the sciences, especially in astronomy, in which he advanced to a high degree [of proficiency]."

As for Hassan ibn Sebbah, "That vile wretch," continues the Nizam, "abode unknown," i.e. quiet and in obscurity, "during the reign of Alp Arslan ; but in the days of the power of Sultan Melik Shah and in the year," i.e. A.D. 1072, "when the latter became quit of the matter of Caderd² and quieted the troubles excited by that prince's revolt in Nishapour, he," i.e. Hassan ibn Sebbah, "came to me [there]." The Vizier goes on to say that he received the newcomer with open arms and on his claiming the fulfilment of their old compact, commended him

¹ Lit. "made returning." The word here used (*m'awwadeh*) means "a returning to one's former habits or fashions." ² i.e. his revolted brother, otherwise Cadir Beg.

to the Sultan's favour and procured him a post of honour and confidence (some authorities say chamberlain, and others mace-bearer) about the latter's person. Thanks to his own natural parts, which seem to have been considerable, and to the support of his old comrade, Hassan quickly gained the Sultan's ear and became well-nigh all-powerful with him; but, like the miscreant and son of a miscreant (as says the Nizam) he was, he used his newly-acquired influence to endeavour, with the blackest perfidy, to bring his benefactor into disfavour with Melik Shah, thinking doubtless to supplant him in his office. Fortunately, however, the Sultan became aware of his treachery and infidelity and was minded (says Nizam ul Mulk) to punish him according to his deserts, but, he (Hassan) being a rearing of the monarch's bounty, the latter's intent fell into delay, i.e. he was reluctant to put it in execution. Meanwhile, Hassan, seeing that his affairs with the Sultan were in ill train, contrived to slink away from the court and eluding the troops sent in pursuit of him, made his way to Rei and Ispahan and thence to Egypt, where he embraced the doctrine of the Ismailiyeh, a Shiah sect to which the Fatimite Khalifs of Egypt belonged. Presently, returning secretly to Persia and joining to himself "certain lewd fellows of the baser sort," he in the year 1090 possessed himself by treachery of the hill-fort of Elemout (or Eagle's Nest) between Cazwin and Ghilan in Persian Irac, where he founded the infamous sect of the Assassins and took the title of Sheikh ul Jebel, extending his power by successive conquests of the neighbouring country. All efforts of the Persian sovereigns

failed to dislodge him and his policy of private assassination made his name a terror in every part of the East. This "energetic politician"¹ of the Middle Ages, who would doubtless in our more settled times have contented himself with the office of Head Centre, Hintchakist, Labour Leader or some such like avocation as should enable him to indulge his talent for mischief and to live in idleness and luxury upon the ruin and misery of his dupes, survived to an advanced age, a notable instance of "*Le bonheur dans le crime*,"² and died, full of years and villainy, in A.D. 1124, leaving his power to his successors, who reigned in his stead until A.D. 1256, when the robber-dynasty was finally extinguished by Helakou or Hulagou, the Tartar conqueror of Baghdad.

It was but two years after the self-establishment of Ibn Sebbah in his mountain lair when his old friend and benefactor, whose goodness he had so shamefully misrequited, fell a victim to the intrigues of his enemies and enviers and was dismissed by the prince who owed to him, if not his life, at least his throne and the prosperity of his reign. Nor did he escape the

¹ My readers will doubtless remember that Col. Saunderson, having occasion, in the course of debate some years ago, to refer to a priest, who was reported to have presided at the brutal murder by his flock of an unfortunate policeman, as a "murderous ruffian" and being met with a howl of execration from the other side of the House, substituted the words "energetic politician" for those objected to by the Opposition. ² My late friend, Villiers de l'Isle Adam, was wont to expound and support with great fervour and cogency a theory, corroborated by many a modern instance, that no one could enjoy perfect happiness in these days, unless he were a perfect criminal, without shame, nerves or conscience.

usual fate of the disgraced Eastern minister, but was, at the age of seventy-four (Oct. 15, 1092), assassinated, some say, by one of Ibn Sebbah's sectaries; but the more probable opinion is that of Ibn Khellikan, who says, "It is asserted that the assassin was suborned against Nizam ul Mulk by Melik Shah, who was tired of seeing him live so long and coveted the numerous fiefs," which included his native province of Tous, "held by him." It is some poor satisfaction to know that the dastardly prince survived his great minister and benefactor but thirty-five days and therefore profited nothing by his crime.

To return to Omar Kheyyam; he appears to have contented himself with the liberal provision (1,200 mithcals of gold,¹ about £600 a year of our money and of course representing a much larger sum in the eleventh century) appointed him by Nizam ul Mulk and to have remained at Nishapour, in the peaceful pursuit of his scientific studies, until the accession of Melik Shah, when he repaired, probably at the Vizier's instance, to the new Sultan's capital, Merw, then one of the finest and most flourishing towns in Asia and a place which, for the pleasantness of its situation, might vie with Nishapour itself, being surrounded with orchards and gardens and intersected by four great canals, as well as some smaller ones, supplied by the river Murghab (or Birdwater) on which it stood. Moreover, it was then, under the mild and enlightened sway of the Seljouki

¹ A *mithcal* is a weight of rather more than a drachm and a quarter avoirdupois; but a "mithcal of gold" commonly means the coin called a *dinar* and anciently worth about ten shillings of our money.

Sultans, or rather of their wise minister, a capital seat of learning and culture, containing ten great libraries, as well as numerous colleges and three cathedral mosques. Here Kheyyam was appointed by Nizam ul Mulk head of the Observatory founded by Melik Shah, i.e. Astronomer Royal; and we learn from Aboulfida's Annals that he was one (and according to other writers, the chief) of the eight astronomers employed by the Sultan in A.D. 1079 to effect the reform in the Calendar introduced by him and known, from his fore-name, Jelaleddin, as the *Tarikh-i-Jelali*, or Jelalian Era. After the deaths of his old schoolfellow and his royal patron, Kheyyam probably returned to Nishapour, the seat of Sultan Senjer, the third son of Melik Shah and governor of Khorasan under the suzerainty of his elder brothers, Berkiyarec and Mohammed, till the death of the latter in 1117, when he succeeded to the Seljouki empire. According to Dauletshah and other biographers, this prince (who is described by Oriental historians as a wise, just, generous and enlightened sovereign, having inherited from his father and grandfather the love of learning and culture and the liking for the society of men of talent and erudition which distinguished them) held Kheyyam in such favour and honour that he was accustomed, as a mark of his esteem, to seat the poet beside himself on the throne. Senjer is known to have been a great lover of poetry and a munificent patron of poets, amongst others, of the famous Enweri before mentioned, who succeeded Kheyyam in his favour; and it was doubtless his poetry that most commended

the latter to him; but, be that as it may, Kheyyam must, either at Nishapour or at Merw, have devoted much of his time to scientific studies, as two mathematical works of his are still extant, i.e., his "Demonstrations of the Problems of Algebra," published in 1851, with a translation, by the late Herr F. Woepcke, and a geometrical work, a "Treatise of the difficulties of Euclid's Definitions," a copy of which is in the Leyden University Library; and the Turkish bibliographer Hajji Khalfa (*Haji Khel'feh*), in the skeleton catalogue of one or more great libraries at Damascus known as his "Bibliographical Lexicon," mentions a set of astronomical tables named after the Sultan Melik Shah, under whose auspices they were doubtless compiled by Kheyyam; whilst the poet himself, in the algebraical treatise above referred to, cites an arithmetical work composed by him in demonstration of the exactitude of the Indian methods of extracting square and cube roots. No copies of the two latter appear to be extant, and Kheyyam doubtless composed other astronomical works to which (says M. Reinaud in the Prolegomena to his translation of Aboulfida's Geography) "he seems to have attached little importance, as he did not trouble himself to provide for the preservation of these writings, which would have made his glory." "Unfortunately," continues M. Reinaud, "Omar joined to his astronomical learning the love of poetry and pleasure; his poems have come down to us, but not so with his astronomical observations, and Oriental writers themselves seem to have no precise knowledge of the latter." The same may be said of his philosophical writings,

which were probably copious and remarkable, as Persian and Arabic writers agree in extolling him as one of the greatest philosophers, even as they allow him to have been one of the foremost men of science,¹ of his age. However, *pace* M. Reinaud, it seems to me that Kheyyam exercised a wise discretion in abandoning his scientific works (a class of mental productions more liable than perhaps any other to lose value and savour with age) to the chances of Time and Fortune and electing to rest his hopes of fame upon his poems, which have not disappointed his confidence and have in effect made his name familiar to millions of readers of whose very existence he could have had no prevision. M. Reinaud, however, only sums up the opinion generally expressed by Oriental historians and biographers, such as Dauletshah and the authors of the *Hefst Iclm*, the *Atishkadeh*, the *Riyas ush Shuara*, the *Mejma ul Fusaha*, etc., who, whilst describing him as "the king of philosophers, the sultan of scholars, the exemplar of the wise," agree in overpassing his poems with scant notice and lamenting his tendency to freethinking and his inclination to "Redbud-coloured wine and tulip-cheeked fair ones," to "gardens and grottoes" (what we should call "chambering and wantonness"); and this opinion of his contemporaries and successors is summarized in an Arabic biographical work, called *Tarikh ul Hukma* or History of the Philosophers, by El Cadi el Akram

¹ Ibn Khaldoun, in his Prolegomena, alludes to him as one of the first mathematicians of the East.

Jemaleddin el Kifti,¹ a distinguished man of letters, who was Vizier of Aleppo in the thirteenth century. According to Herr Woepcke, who was the first to bring this document to light, the abridgment by Ez Zouzeni of the *Tarikh ul Hukma*,² from which he quotes, is stated in the MS. to have been completed in A.H. 647 (A.D. 1249-50) or a year or less after El Kifti's death. As the extract published by Herr Woepcke is the most important piece of information relative to Kheyyam extant and affords, indeed, with the Wesaya of Nizam ul Mulk already cited, practically the only considerable materials for the tracing of his life, I translate it here in extenso :—

“ Omar el Kheyyam, Imam of Khorasan and the chief scholar of his time, knew the lore of Ancient Greece and exhorted to the seeking of the One, the Ruler, by the purification of the corporeal movements” (or actions), “for the cleansing of the human soul. Moreover, he enjoined to assiduous study of civic

¹ Some authorities give the author's name as Ibn el Cupti, or Son of the Copt; but according to Ibn Khellikan, it was El Kifti (*Chifti*) and he was a native of Kift, a city of Upper Egypt.

² Mr. Whinfield speaks of this work (the *Tarikh ul Hukma*) as being by Aboulfeth esh Shehrestani, a theological writer of the twelfth century (ob. A.D. 1153) and a contemporary and countryman of Kheyyam, having been born at Shehrestan in Khorasan, apparently on the faith of a statement by Herr Haarbrücher, in the preface to his translation of Esh Shehrestani's *Kitab ul Milal wa'n Nihel* (or Treatise of Religions and Sects), that his author was reported to have written a *Tarikh ul Hukma*, which he (Haarbrücher) had never seen, but of which he had heard from two persons who professed to have seen copies of a translation of the book. I cannot, however, find that any such book is extant, nor is it mentioned in the life of Esh Shehrestani by Ibn Khellikan, who would scarcely have omitted to record so important a work, had he known of its existence.

economy" (*Siyasah*, Gr. *Politeia*, i.e. the regime of a perfect state, founded on love) "according to the precepts of the ancient Greeks" (e.g. Plato's *Laws* and *Republic*). "The latter-day Soufis have, indeed, fastened on somewhat of the externals of his poetry and transferred" (or adapted) "them to their rite," (observance or canon), "citing" (or discussing) "them in their assemblies, general and particular; but the internals" (i.e. the inner or essential sense) "thereof are matters of liberal equity" (i.e., *semble*, natural or universal religion) "and general principles of universal obligation. As the folk of his time found fault with his religious belief and blazoned abroad the opinions which he would fain have concealed, he feared for his blood" (i.e. life) "and put a curb on his tongue and his pen. He made the pilgrimage [to Mecca], rather for the sake of conformity than out of piety, and privily discovered impure" (i.e. unorthodox) "ideas. When he arrived at Baghdad, [on his return from Mecca], there flocked to him the folk of his way in ancient lore," (i.e., those who prosecuted the study of Greek and other philosophy or who were of his way of thinking); "but he shut the door on them [with] the shutting of the repentant (*nadim*¹), not of the boon-companion (*nedim*¹), and returned to his own city" (i.e. Nishapour), "[where he fell to] going morning and evening to the place of worship" (i.e. the mosque) "and concealing his secrets" (i.e. his private opinions),

¹ A good specimen of the solemn puns which the Arabs are fond of introducing into the most serious works. *Nadim* and *Nedim*, words practically opposite in meaning, come from the same root, *nedima*.

"and yet needs must they appear" (i.e., nevertheless, they were generally known). "He lacked of a peer" (or equal) "in the lore of the stars and in philosophy" (science generally?), "and in these matters he would have been quoted for a byword," (i.e. passed into a proverb), "had he [but] been vouchsafed continence" (i.e. self-control); "and there are extant of his light" (syn. fugitive or scurril) "verses, the ambiguous wording of which betrayed his privy meaning and troubled the vein of his conception" (or purpose) "with hidden impurity."¹

The above passage is evidently from the hand of a thoroughly orthodox Mohammedan, who was, notwithstanding the manifest horror in which he held the heterodox opinions of the great scholar of whom he spoke and whose scientific works it is plain that he admired without reserve, anxious to judge fairly and impartially of his character, as far, at least, as religious bigotry would allow him to do so. We have seen how slightly he speaks of Kheyyam's poems, and all historians and biographers, in whom I have been able to find any notice of him, treat what has proved to be his chief title to remembrance much in the same disdainful way. It will be noticed that El Kifti speaks of the great astronomer as "Imam of Khorasan"; and this opens up a point of question. The literal meaning of *Imam* is "One whose leadership or example is

¹ The above passage is followed by four commonplace lines of Arabic verse upon the well-worn subject of the instability of fortune and the necessity of contentment and resignation. They are not attributed to Kheyyam, nor have they any connection with the text, and have apparently found their way there by mistake.

to be followed, a pattern, a model or exemplar"; but the word is commonly used in the sense either of (1) a leader or fugleman of the people at public worship, generally some especially devout and learned (in religious matters) member of the congregation, and (by corruption) the manager (not a priest) of a mosque, who receives its revenues and provides for the regular services, etc.; or (2) one of the chiefs (such as Abou Henifeh) of the four great orthodox schools of theology or religious jurisprudence, or some other leading doctor of divinity, such as Muwefic-ed-din already mentioned. In this latter sense the title cannot have been applied to Kheyyam, as he certainly never was a doctor of divinity, his ordinary style being Hakim (*Hhekim*), i.e. doctor or professor of science, especially medicine or philosophy (*hhikmeh*); but it is possible, though hardly probable, that he may have carried the prudent practice of conformity recorded by El Kifti so far as to have been chosen *Imam* in the first sense, i.e. leader of the congregation at prayer. It is, however, more likely (and this would harmonize with the crabbed style of the passage from the *Tarikh ul Hukma*, the author of which apparently aimed at showing his knowledge of the niceties of the Arabic language by employing words in uncommon and strained senses) that the word is here intended to convey that he was the great exemplar or (as we should say) "bright particular star" of his native land in the matter of learning. As for his conformity to orthodox Mohammedan practice, it can only be regarded as a matter of the commonest worldly prudence, excusable in a man of genius,

who saw no reason for imperilling the work of his life and exposing himself to gratuitous and unprofitable martyrdom at the hands of the narrow-minded and self-seeking bigots of his day, who were, after the manner of their kind, always ready to fall upon anyone whose opinions threatened their vested abuses, and the motley mob of the "uncooked" (to use his own favourite name for the unthinking vulgar), who were as sheep under their lead. In his case, too, there appears to have been especial cause for caution, in a city like Nishapour, whose inhabitants bore much such a bad name for turbulence and intolerance as did those of the twin cities of Bassora and Cufa, under the earlier Khalifs of Baghdad. A poet called El Mouradi, quoted by the geographer Yacout el Himawi (ob. A.D. 1229), says of them:—

"Stranger, beware lest thou go to Nishapour, for in that town neither merit nor lineage is a safeguard and the respect due to humanity is ignored."

And his testimony is amply corroborated by other writers, as well as by Kheyyam himself, who unsparingly lashes the vices of "the folk of his time," (evidently meaning his fellow-citizens of Nishapour,) whenever the opportunity offers. (See in particular, Quatrains 64, 201, 218, 254, 306, 360, 546, etc., etc.) During the greater part of his life, his native city must, according to historians, have been in a chronic state of uproar and intestine discord, especially after the death of the wise and beneficent Nizam ul Mulk, who passed much of his time at the capital of Khorasan and seems to have possessed an especial

faculty for soothing and appeasing popular troubles, and during the wars of the succession, which resulted in the establishment of Berkiyarec on the throne of his father, Melik Shah, when Nishapour was besieged and taken by that prince. We learn from the historian Ibn el Athir that the city was afterwards a prey to internal dissensions for some three years' space, i.e. from 1095 to 1097, and that the troubles culminated in a religious war which broke out, in 1096, between the orthodox Sunni sects and the Keramiyeh heretics, (so called from the name of their founder, Ibn ul Kiram, who revived the Egypto-Christian doctrine of Anthropomorphism and applied it to Mohammedanism,) and which resulted, after great loss of life on both sides, in the expulsion of the Keramiyeh and the destruction of their colleges. Again, in 1101, the Sultan Berkiyarec ordered the extermination of the Batiniyeh or Internalists (as the Ismailiyeh or religious followers of Hassan ibn Sebbah were now more generally called, from the hidden or spiritual meanings which they professed to discover in the literal words of the Koran), and there can be little doubt that the orthodox party made the royal decree a pretext for the massacre, or, at least, the maltreatment, of those who were obnoxious to them for their freethinking tendencies or their opposition to the arbitrary use of ecclesiastical power. To Kheyyam, in particular, this new religious crusade must, in all probability, have been peculiarly dangerous, as his fellow-citizens are not likely to have forgotten his early connection with the Chief of the Assassins and some of the opinions known

to be held by him and expressed in his poems bore a suspicious or, at the least, a colourable resemblance to the tenets of the Batiniyeh, who professed, for instance, that all things apparent were merely symbols, that the world was eternal, without beginning or ending, and that Time was infinite, that Paradise and Hell were mere figures of speech and that the Resurrection was purely spiritual, death being the real resurrection for everyone, doctrines evidently borrowed, in a more or less garbled form, from the Vedantic philosophy of Ancient India. It is, indeed, difficult to imagine how the poet can have escaped the myriad dangers which must have beset so independent and courageous a thinker in a time and situation of exceptional disturbance and peril; and there can be little doubt that, but for the protection of his patron Shah Senjer and the fortunate circumstance that the latter was, during his whole life, in constant residence at Nishapour, which he preferred to any other dwelling-place, Khayyam would inevitably have fallen a victim to the ignorance and intolerance of the populace, whose prejudices were shocked by the freedom of his life and opinions, or to the private malice of the Soufis and the clerical party, whose hypocritical tricks and abuses he lashed with such unsparing satire.¹

¹ Nor indeed is the popular exasperation to be wondered at; there are not wanting signs (cf. Quatrain 101, etc.) that Khayyam himself was at times amazed at his own impunity, and we have only to transport the situation in imagination to our own times to realize the extent of the scandal which his proceedings must have provoked among the orthodox of his day. It makes one's hair stand on end, for instance, to imagine the blood-curdling sensation

If the powerful patronage enjoyed by Kheyyam was, as we cannot doubt, the means of saving him from actually becoming a sacrifice to popular passion and theological jealousy, it would seem, from the complaints of exile and misery suffered which he makes in his quatrains, (see Nos. 325, 342, 24, 86, 322-3, 386, 355, 559, etc.,) that he must have been forced, from time to

which would be excited in the starch circles of Radical orthodoxy, were an Astronomer Royal to exchange the "decent customary roof" of his venerable locks, the sable "Crown of El Islam" of middle-class respectability, for a disreputable wreath of Bacchanalian roses and taking up his station by the drinking fountain over against the Observatory, in company with a banjo, a mutton ham (see Quatrain 749), a runlet of "Ireland's Eye" and two or three ladies of easy virtue, to spend the al-fresco season of Spring and Summer in startling the scandalized echoes of Greenwich Park with the sounds of unhallowed conviviality and scurril ditties, showing scant respect for the dogma of the Trinity and the Equator generally and heaping ribald ridicule upon the sacrosanct Jacobin delusions of Free Trade, popular education, government by gabble, the infallibility of the Working Man, free redistribution of property, the worship of the worthless in general and in particular of the Levantine Jew-Arab self-styled "Greek" and the sweet Slav polytheist who decorates himself with the title of "Eastern Christian," the Poets of the Deliquescence, the "Bathetic" Symphony of Jacobs, alias Tschalkoffsky, ("that beastly Bathetic!" as a musician of my acquaintance calls it), the novels of Mesdames ••• and ••• and the thousand and one other cheap idols, more or less clay-footed, of that "bisson multitude" which, like Boccaccio's women, "in everything," with an unerring instinct, "still chooses the worst." Who can doubt but that the great heart of Bouverie Street and Brixton would be stirred to the core and that the crews of the *Gaelic Muse*, the *Squaker* and the *Scrutator* and the whole log-rolling clan, headed by the modern Crichton, Maker of Poets and Legislator of Parnassus, and reinforced by a detachment of Gruellers and Beanbaggers, under the command of the Apostles to the Publicans and the Bulgarians, would charter a penny boat, regardless of expense, and hasten *gladius et fustibus*, on the wings of steam, to annihilate the sacrilegious offender and wipe out the adulterous blot from the sacred precincts of the People's Park?

time, to seek safety in flight; and it is not unlikely, indeed, that he not only, on the disgrace and death of Nizam ul Mulk, lost the comfortable provision made for him by that statesman, but shared, in some measure, the fate which commonly overtakes the whole family and connections of a fallen minister or favourite in the East. Probably, he was for a time exiled from his native land, and it is perhaps to this period of enforced strangerhood that we may assign his pilgrimage to Mecca, as well as the other wanderings, (possibly including a visit to India, then in great part under the sway of the Gheznevide princes, the nominal suzerains of the five first Seljouki Sultans of Persia,) of which he speaks in his poems. Unfortunately, we have no definite information as to this and it is well-nigh impossible to found any reasonable hypothesis upon the statements contained in his quatrains, in consequence of the illogical Eastern usage, which arranges an author's poetical works, not in the order of their composition or in accordance with their tenour, but in mechanical alphabetical sequence, according to the letters which end the rhyme-words of the various pieces. It is probable, however, that the latter years of his life were passed in comparative comfort, under the patronage of Shah Senjer, in his native city of Nishapour, and he appears, notwithstanding the troubles and trials of which he complains, to have attained to a patriarchal age. The date of his birth is nowhere mentioned; and here again we are hampered by the singular usage, in vogue with Oriental biographers, of recording, as a matter of course, the dates of the deaths only of their heroes and leaving

the dates of their births and their ages for the most part unmentioned as of no importance ;¹ e.g., the most considerable work of the kind in the Arabic language, the great biographical dictionary of Shemseddin Aboulabbas Ahmed ibn Khellikan, is entitled *Kitab Wefiyat ul Eyan*, "The Book of the Deaths of the Eminent," and gives the dates of birth and ages of the persons recorded (when it does so) only incidentally. Kheyyam's death is pretty generally agreed to have occurred in the year 1123-24 (A.H. 517), and he himself states (see Quatrain 681) that he had lived a hundred years. This statement, which we might otherwise be tempted to disregard as a poetical exaggeration, is indirectly confirmed by Nizam ul Mulk, who in his *Wesaya* expressly states that Kheyyam was of the same age as himself (*hem bi-sinn-i-men*, "the fellow or like in age of myself," a variation of the ordinary *hem-sin-i-men*, "my age-fellow"); and the correctness of this assertion I see no reason to doubt. Nizam ul Mulk was born in 1018 and we may therefore assume, upon the authority of this double piece of evidence, that his old schoolfellow Kheyyam was about 105 years old, more or less, at the time of his death. He was buried at Nishapour and his tomb is still shown without the city, where it stands in the midst of the ruins caused by the Tartar invasion of the next century. "It is," says the Russian

¹ The reason of this curious custom was probably that the death-dates, being comparatively recent, were more easily ascertained and more likely to be authentic, whereas the birth-dates, being more remote, were less readily procurable and less susceptible of verification.

traveller Khanikoff, "a ponderous building of unburnt brick, without ornament or inscription, date or epitaph, of any kind; but it probably covers the actual burial-place of the poet, as the inhabitants of Nishapour still pride themselves upon their illustrious fellow-citizen and it is therefore no matter for surprise that the tradition of the site of his tomb should have been faithfully preserved among them."

I close this scanty sketch of Kheyyam's life with a translation, from the Persian text, (as given by Hyde in his work on the religion of the ancient Persians and stated by him to be an extract from the preface to a manuscript copy of Kheyyam's Poems, containing somewhat more than 200 quatrains,) of the well-known anecdote concerning his grave.

"Quoth Nizami Urouzi of Samarcand,¹ one of Kheyyam's disciples, who was himself the most learned man of his time: 'I chanced to meet Khwajeh² Omar in Balkh and had a session³ with him; and in course of talk he said, "My grave shall be in a place where every Spring the North Wind shall be rose-scattering on it." At this wonder overcame me and I said in myself, "This man speaketh not⁴ idly"; and behold, when, some time after his death, it betided me to pass by Nishapour, I sought out his grave and found that it was hard by the wall of a garden and fruit-bearing trees, [such as] pomegranates,

¹ *Nitsami 'Uroudsi Semerkendi*, a twelfth-century poet, who was a pupil of the celebrated poet Amir Mu'izzi, but perhaps learned astronomy and mathematics of Kheyyam.

² I.e. Master, Doctor, Professor.

³ I.e. a convivial meeting.

⁴ In the preface to the Calcutta Edition of the Quatrains, the "not" is omitted, making nonsense of the passage.

stretched forth their branches without the garden wall, in such wise that the blossoms were strown on his tomb and it appeared not among them.¹ [When I saw this,] I marvelled at Khwajeh Omar's saying and betook myself to his house, where when I came and enquired, it was told me that his wish was on this wise.' " ²

II.

One of the points upon which editors and translators of Khayyam have most widely differed is the question of the exact nature of the poet's religious or philosophical opinions. We have seen, by the extract from the *Tarikh ul Hukma* (ante, p. xxx), that, although he heaped ridicule upon the Soufis of his time and unsparingly exposed their hypocrisy and pretentiousness, he was nevertheless claimed as an affiliate or co-religionist by succeeding generations of that sect, which is still influential in modern Persia, and some editors, such as M. Nicolas, (who is manifestly, however, in this case, the mere mouthpiece of the Persian Soufi friend or friends who assisted him in translating and annotating the Rubaiyat,) do not hesitate, at the present day, to ascribe to all his poems a mystical meaning, accommodated to the Soufi canon, and to pass over, without notice, the innumerable passages which are altogether at variance with such an interpretation. Others, again, like Mr. Whinfield, discard,

¹ i.e., it was hidden under them.

² i.e., it was his wish that he should be buried where the trees would drop their flowers on his grave.

as of slight significance, the numerous quatrains in which Khayyam, with an evident fulness of purpose and deliberation, expresses or infers opinions completely incompatible with the belief in any form of Theism, and magnifying the importance of such passages as can by any possibility be twisted into an expression of conformity to revealed religion, insist upon the theory that the poet was in reality essentially a believer in the Semitic doctrine of the existence of a personal God, Creator and Governor of all things. Mr. Fitzgerald, in his preface to the second edition (published in 1868) of his "Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám," with excellent judgment and critical sense, altogether repudiated the absurd imputation to Khayyam of those Soufi opinions of which he seems, indeed, to have been a principal opponent; and we have already seen that El Kifti, in the passage above quoted (see ante, p. xxx), explicitly denies that his poems were susceptible of the mystical interpretation which the "Men of the Cloak" sought to place upon them. On the other hand, the opinion expressed of the poet's life and character by the same writer and fully corroborated by other Oriental historians and biographers, who agree in declaring that he was "of ill repute" (*niknam ne-boud*, lit. "was not of good name,") and that he was inclined to revolt against authority (*mall ber beght boud*), i.e. to heterodoxy and religious nonconformity, and accuse him of a form of rationalism (*felsefet*, i.e. philosophy, in the sense of freethinking or infidelity) derived from the study of the old Greek writers, in whose lore he was the foremost scholar of his day, is in itself

sufficient to negative the hypothesis of his belief in Semitic Theism, without the necessity of referring to the many prominent passages in which he heaps ridicule upon the theocratic idea. It is true, indeed, that other portions of his poems contain expressions and allusions which seem, at first sight, to point to a theistic belief on his part, but it must be remembered that poets and poetical writers of all countries, orthodox and unorthodox, have in all ages been in the habit of employing, for poetical purposes, the formulas and verbal paraphernalia of current religious beliefs, become by long popular usage an integral part of the language and literature of the lands in which they obtain and an essential constituent of the material and ornament of literary expression. In Muslim countries, in particular, the language and phraseology of the Koran (upon which it must be remembered that the whole formal scheme of Arabic grammar and philology is founded and which may literally be said to form the essential basis of Muslim culture¹) are the very essence and foundation of the popular, the literary and the scientific, no less than of the religious, speech of all Mohammedan peoples and affect and colour the every-day life of all classes in a far greater degree than do those of the Bible among Christians; and the use, therefore,

¹ Mohammed being by his own confession an illiterate man, his Koran was naturally full of sins against the grammar of his day; but, as no pious Mohammedan could think of attributing error to a work asserted to have come direct from the hand of the Deity and to be therefore *supra grammaticam*, it was grammar that had to give way and remodel its rules and system in accordance with the dicta of the "Unlettered Prophet."

of Koranic and Traditional formulas and phrases is no more a proof of orthodoxy on the part of an Oriental writer than is a similar employment of Biblical language with ourselves. No one, for instance, would think of ascribing orthodox sentiments to Alfred de Musset or Heine (of all modern poets, perhaps, most like Kheyyam), because of their perpetual appeals to "le bon Dieu" or "der liebe Gott," or of claiming Mr. Swinburne as a formal believer in Christianity because he wrote his magnificent "Litany" or because (like those of all post-Jacobean English poets who are worth the name) his poems are full of the music and the colour of that incomparable "Authorized Version," which forms, with the plays of Shakspeare, the main heritage and chief glory of English literature. To the poet, whose office is not the scientific demonstration of philosophical truth, but the presentation of abstract ideas in their concrete form of the phenomena of experience, the popular conception of a personal Deity, to whom may be ascribed the goods and who may be blamed for the ills of existence, is, in the plastic sense, as indispensable a part of the means and material of his art as are sun, stars and moon, sea and sky, Spring and Summer, flowers and trees; because poetry deals, not alone with that which is ideally good and true, but with humanity, its ideas, its opinions and (especially) its feelings, right and wrong, good and bad, as a whole, holding nothing human alien from itself neither "making that unclean which" the spirit of ideality "hath cleansed," and the errors and delusions of mankind

are therefore as much and as necessary a constituent of its machinery as their virtues and their certitudes. Kheyyam, again, continually uses the technical terms of the Soufis, such, e.g., as *teric* (path), *niyas* (desire, need, supplication, etc.), *husour* (presence), *hekikel* (certainty), etc., etc.; but the Soufi terminology, like that of every metaphysical system of wide dissemination, was (and still is) the common property of Oriental writers and its use for literary purposes in no way attests the affiliation of the user to the sect whose language he borrows. Moreover, our poet for the most part uses the phrases and turns of speech he borrows from both sources, Soufi and Mohammedan, in an obviously satirical or poetical sense; and where it would seem that he does so literally and sincerely, this, to my mind, is due, not to his belief in the doctrines of the religious or metaphysical systems of whose terminology he avails himself, but to the fact that his own religious and philosophical creed was derived, in common with the latter, although in a purer, more direct and less sophisticated form, from a far older and remoter source, the fount and origin of all the various metaphysical systems which have ministered to the ideal needs of the human race; to wit, the first of all World-Scriptures, the VEDAS, the Bible of that primæval Aryan race, to which the world owes its highest development.

The religion of the Western (or Southern) branch of the great Aryan family, i.e. that by which India and Persia were colonized, was originally a simple, but elevated form of Pantheism, based upon the belief in a supreme (impersonal) entity (or rather

essence of life), from which the world and all existing things proceeded, and symbolized by the reverence or worship of the elemental powers of Nature and in particular of light and fire, as the noblest and most venerable of natural forces. The doctrines of this religion are contained in the four *Vedas* or "Books," which are collections of hymns in praise of the deified forces of Nature, of ritual and liturgical directions and of mythological narratives and legends. They are generally allowed to be the oldest literary work in existence and their origin is, indeed, lost in "the dark backward and abysm of time"; although they are conjectured by Sanscrit scholars to have been collected and written down, in the form in which they have reached us, during the conquest by the Hindoo branch of the Aryans of the Punjab and Northern India generally. The oldest and most important of the four books is the Rig Veda or Book of Praise, consisting of over a thousand hymns of nature-worship; it is supposed, from internal evidence, to have been composed before the invention of writing and no Sanscrit scholar has, to my knowledge, ventured to assign it to a more recent date than 1400 B.C., whilst other authorities of equal weight ascribe to it an antiquity of upwards of four thousand years. To the original ritual or poetical nucleus of the Vedas were from time to time added what were called *Brahmanas* and *Sutras*, being aphoristic, exegetic, argumentative and legendary commentaries upon the *Mantras* or Hymns and bearing much the same relation to them as the epistolary part of the New Testament does to the Psalms and the Prophetic Books of the

Hebrew Bible, and the whole was in process of time crowned by the addition of a number of explanatory philosophical treatises, called the Upanishads or "Sessions" (also the Vedantas or final parts of the Vedas, whence the Vedantic system), expounding, classifying and illustrating the dogmas and teachings of the Vedas and evolving from their primitive poetry of natural religion a definite theosophical system, called the Vedantic philosophy, which is conjectured to have been first promulgated about eight hundred years before our era and has been justly described as the sublimest and most exalted product of human speculation, as applied to the consideration of the problems of existence. It is difficult, in the small space which is all that can here be devoted to the subject, to give any adequate idea of the singularly subtle purport and comprehensive scope of this primæval Pantheism, which is still, after so many ages, the creed of hundreds of millions of human beings of all orders of intellect and which offers to a large majority of the highest intelligences of the modern world the only satisfactory explanation (or suggestion of explanation) of the enigmas of life; "my long thought," as Khéyyam himself says, "I cannot tell briefly"; but it will suffice, for the present purpose, to set out, in as few words as possible, the nature of its principal tenets; which are, first and foremost, the belief in one universal and impersonal essence of life, present in all things, the least as well as the greatest, "in the soul as in the sun," without beginning or ending, i.e. BRÁHMAN, (*neuter*, not to be confounded with the God Brahma or Brahman, *masculine*,

or with the name of the sacerdotal class,) otherwise the "Undifferenced Self." (2) Over this Impersonal Self (which is the basis of all existence and which is the One Reality among all unrealities), and being an illusive projection therefrom, is woven, like a veil, the MAYA or World-Figment, all things other than the Self being a mere illusion of the senses, due to "ignorance," which ceases when one has learned to know that (i.e. the Self) which alone really exists. (3) The miseries of human life, being a part of the World-Illusion, are due wholly to ignorance of the secret of the world, an ignorance the outward and visible sign of which is belief in *Duality*, i.e. the separation of Subject and Object, Me and Not-Me, and the consideration of the rest of existing things as distinct and different from oneself; and the deliverance from this ignorance and misery, and incidentally from the ever-renascent woes of metempsychosis (the identification of which by Schopenhauer with the Will-to-be is one of the capital spiritual events of the nineteenth century), is to be achieved by the acquisition of "knowledge." This latter is to be attained only by withdrawal from the world and repudiation of all its illusory goods and needs, by purging the heart of desire, by self-severance from all the phantasmagoric bonds and attachments of social life and family and self-devotion to mystic contemplation, which will gradually lead the perfected sage to the knowledge of Unity,—i.e. the all-and-only important fact that all things are One in the Undifferenced Self,—and consequent absorption in that Self, which is the sole thing perdurable among all the

things that endure not. (4) This acceptance of the doctrine of the unity of life in everything naturally leads the Vedantist to the adoption of *Mitleid* or sympathy with all things, high and low ; one of the chief tenets of his religion is the practice of tenderness towards all forms of sentient life and (what necessarily follows upon this practice and that of detachment from the world) the observance of the strictest principles of *natural* morality, of truth, continence, disinterestedness, contentment and purity of body and soul. (5) Gods and religions are on *this* side of the evolution of the Self ; i.e., the worship of the first and the practice of the second are good and meritorious and are even recommended as a preliminary means of purification and mortification of the bodily lusts and for the satisfaction of the metaphysical needs of those who are unqualified to accept abstract truth ; the sage is not forbidden to conform to the cults of his country and it is recognized that religious conformity and liturgical and ritual observances are efficacious in securing the conformer against (what is for want of a better word figuratively called) the pains of Hell and enabling him to obtain (what is in like manner called) the rewards of Heaven ; but Gods, Hell and Heaven are all in fact but a part of the World-Figment and are subject, like mortals, to death and transiency. The sage, when he has learned to know the secret of the world, knows their unreality and that of all things, save only the Self, which alone is real and eternal.¹

¹ These particulars (as well as the quotations from the Upanishads contained in my notes to the quatrains) are for the most part derived from Mr. Archibald

The division of the great Aryan family, which produced the Vedas and which is known by Sanscrit scholars as the Western or Southern Division, is recorded to have, at the time of leaving its ancestral home among the Pamir plateaus, separated into two portions, identical in language, religious belief and general racial and social characteristics, one of which, the Indic, crossed the Himalayas and conquered India, whilst the other, the Iranic, colonized Persia, which was named from them the land of Iran or Aryana. Khorasan, the ancient Nesaïa, was the very centre and focus of the Aryan settlement and its old capital, now Nishapour, originally known as *Transhehr* or the City of the Aryans, is fabled to have been founded by the kings of the Jemshidite family, the first great dynasty of the invading race, who long occupied it as their seat of power. Khorasan has always been regarded as that part of Persia in which the Aryan civilization longest subsisted in its original vivacity, making it the central point of Iranian and indeed, for a long period, of Oriental culture generally; it was called by its Aryan settlers the new Arya-varta or Land of the Aryans, in memory of their original home in farthest North-West Asia, and many traces of the manners, customs and habits of the invading race, such, in particular, as the peculiar feudal system established by the latter, survived there

Gough's "Philosophy of the Upanishads," an excellent digest of the principal books, which would be still more valuable were it not that the author's Semitic training forbids him to appreciate the savour of any religious system untainted by the Foetor Judaicus and so prevents him from estimating the Vedantic philosophy at anything like its true spiritual value.

till a comparatively modern period. The inhabitants of Khorasan (and especially of the north-west portion, the ancient "Nisaeen Fields," in which Nishapour is situate) were the most tenacious and successful of all the Persians in defending their ancient liberties and religion against the invading Turanian and Semitic hordes which overran the rest of Iran, and they were, in particular, the most pertinacious in refusing to exchange the ancient Vedic religion for the debased compromise between the latter and the theistic ideas of Semitic and Aramaean origin which had found their way into the empire in consequence of the conquests of the great Cyrus, known as Zoroastrianism. The religion of Zoroaster, though installed, in the reign of Darius Hystaspes (about 500 B.C.), as the state creed of the empire, never, in fact, succeeded in supplanting the ancient faith, the "Religion of the Pure Law," as the ancient Aryans, the well-named "Children of the Light," called it, in Khorasan; nor was it till the Mohammedan Conquest that the militant bigotry of the followers of the Camel Driver of Mecca prevailed to suppress it, at all events, in appearance. Long as the vestiges of the ancient faith survived in Persia, it is not till the year 1656 of our era that we hear of an actual Persian translation of the most important portion of the Vedantic Canon, the Upanishads, made by the Brahmans of Benares, at the instance of the Indian prince, Dara Shikuh, brother of the Emperor Aurengzebe, published as the *Apnikhal* or *Sirr-us-Esrar* (Secret of Secrets) and Latinized in 1801-2 by Anquetil du Perron,

(whose translation is described by Schopenhauer as the most precious gift bestowed by the present century,) under the title of "Oupnekhat, id est, Secretum Tegendum." However, the essence of the Upanishads seems, well-nigh immediately after their promulgation in their original form, to have made its way westward and especially to have penetrated into Greece, as well through Pythagoras, who is fabled to have visited India and Persia and to have there imbibed the doctrines of the Brahmanic sages, as through Xenophanes and the Eleatic school of philosophers, the Indian origin of whose teachings is not to be mistaken.

If this was the case with the comparatively remote and remotely related races of Ancient Greece, it is absolutely certain that the Vedantic doctrines must, yet earlier, have found their way, in the full height of their vivacity, to the adjoining country of Iran, so closely akin, in race, position and spirit, to the Hindu Aryans; and Nishapour, being an early and important stage of the great caravan-route between India and Persia, must, we may be assured, have been one of the first places to receive the new knowledge in all its vigour and purity. That this was the case and that the Vedantic philosophy must have found congenial soil and struck deep root in the minds of the Iranians is evident from the number of Pantheistic sects, covering their secret doctrines with veils, more or less thin, of outward conformity to the ruling religion of Islam, which have long existed and still flourish in Persia and whose inspiration is evidently borrowed, in varying degrees

of remoteness, from a Brahmanic source. The two chiefest and most widely spread of them, Soufism itself and its more modern scion of Bábism, with the doctrines of which sects modern Persian society is said to be honeycombed, are but garbled forms of Vedantic Pantheism, hopelessly corrupted and despoiled of its pristine significance by the extravagant and unphilosophical attempt to accommodate it to the canon of the Mohammedan creed, the Semitic optimism of which is incurably contrary to the spirit of the Indian philosophy; and Zoroastrianism was, as I have before remarked, another offshoot of the Vedantas, yet more debased and degraded by the infusion of Judaic Theism and by the adjunction of the Aramaean dogma of the duality of Good and Evil, both completely foreign to the Vedantic idea.

With the general scope of the Vedantic philosophy it is practically certain that Kheyyam, native and inhabitant for the greater part of his life as he was of a district which was of necessity the chief point of impact and (so to speak) focus of the influence of Indian ideas, must have early become acquainted; and that he, at some period or other of his career, not only held, but openly professed and taught the chief doctrines of the Upanishads, as digested into a regular system by Vyasa, Sandilya, Sankara and other eminent schoolmen of Hindostan, is attested by El Kifti himself, who, in the passage already quoted from the *Tarikh ul Hukma*, relates that he (Kheyyam) "exhorted to the seeking of the One, the Ruler, by the purification of the corporeal movements (or actions),

for the cleansing of the human soul"; an unmistakeable description, by a writer manifestly ill-acquainted with the subject, of the process of self-purification, through continence and *askēsis* or abstraction from the world, by which the Vedantic sage prepares himself for the attainment of the knowledge of Unity, i.e. of Brahman or the Self, the words "the Ruler" being obviously an unmeaning addition on the part of the orthodox Mohammedan author or abridger. Kheyyam's philosophical writings, which would assuredly have afforded us conclusive evidence on this point, are apparently irrecoverably lost; but, to my mind, no other evidence is needed than that of the extract above cited and of the numerous corroborative passages to be found in his poems to establish beyond reasonable doubt the nature of his religious opinions and teachings. It is difficult, indeed, to interpret such quatrains, for instance, as those of the Drops of Water and the Sea (No. 727), of the *Ens Essentialis* and of Duality (Nos. 412 and 413), of "This visible world" (No. 525), of "Truth's mysteries" (No. 532), of "The door of desire" (No. 548), of "In quest of Jem's cup" (No. 569), of "None ever saw" (No. 534), of "My soul in the Sphere's script" (No. 58), of "Sheer folly, O sage" (No. 72), of "That wine" (No. 175), of "This illusory moment" (No. 484), of "Seek not gladness" (No. 198), of "Wilt have the lore" (No. 304), of "The One Great Whole" (No. 349), of "This thy being" (No. 455), of "The day when the blessed hosts" (No. 670), of "O heart, since thou sat'st" (No. 756), of "Whiles, hiding

Thyself" (No. 757), of "For the sake of the lust" (No. 760), of "Albeit nought go" (No. 766), of "The pathway of witlessness" (No. 779), of "Away with vain-grieving" (No. 782), of "This world's but a breath" (No. 803), of "For the winecup and ruby lips" (No. 807), of "Thou who'rt the compend" (No. 809), etc., in any other sense than that of Vedantic Pantheism. Whenever the occasion arises, he invariably enounces, either openly or implicitly, the essential tenets of the Indian philosophy (including the doctrine of metempsychosis, v. Quatrains 175, 192, 691, etc., etc.), and inculcates the necessity, on the part of the sage, of acquiring "knowledge," (i.e. of the Unity of the Self,) as the one thing important, a quest to be achieved by the renouncement of desire, the purification of the soul from the lusts of the world and the practice of moral goodness, in its essential meaning of universal sympathy (*Milleid*), as distinguished from the bastard compromise, the "fable agreed upon," which the needs of social life have adopted as its representative. Wherever he deliberately indicates his religious belief, it bears no other character and is stamped with no other hall-mark than that of Vedantic Pantheism; it is certainly altogether free from Semitic optimism and has no taint of that "Foetor Judaicus" which is omnipresent in Soufism. I do not think it advisable to lengthen this notice by quoting, in extenso, the various passages of Khayyam's poems (many of which I have indicated above) which support my theory of the Indian origin of his philosophical and religious opinions, as I have (as it were)

underlined a large number of the passages in question by quoting freely from the Upanishads, wherever I thought it useful to do so, in my notes to the ensuing translation, and with the help of these latter, as well as of the brief abstract above given of the main principles of the Vedantic philosophy, and by means of a comparison therewith of the poet's ideas, as expressed by him in his quatrains, my readers will find no difficulty in deciding for themselves upon the question.

In stating my conviction, as set out in the foregoing pages, that Kheyyam's philosophic and religious opinions were, in their essential points, based upon the teachings of the Vedantas, I do not for a moment pretend to maintain that he professed all the niceties of the Vedantic doctrines as propounded by the Indian schoolmen or that, in particular, he practised the asceticism, self-suppression and other quasi-religious practices, comprised under the general name of *Yoga*, which have, in process of time, been grafted upon the austere spiritual simplicity of the original creed, in itself by no means *religious*, in the ritual and liturgical sense of the term, but corrupted and distorted, like all other ideas of its kind, by alterations and suppressions and especially by additions, (made for the convenience and in the interests of the priestly class or called for by the supposed necessity of adapting it to the inferior capacity of the general mass of humanity, who are incapable of apprehending abstract truth, untimpered by mythological illusion,) and (what is yet worse) sophisticated by that spirit of quackery and imposture, which has made the word "theosophy" to

stink in the nostrils of the modern world and has rendered the name of "theosophist" a synonym for trumpery sorcerer and paltry cheat. But its main principles, it seems to me, there can be no doubt for a student of his poems, were the basis of his creed, the system by which he explained to himself the problems of the universe and by whose light he guided himself in his navigation of the stormy and sterile ocean of existence. As the modern Christian professes the theological tenets of Christianity, whilst rejecting, as unpractical, the capital principles of *askesis* and abnegation which seem to the philosophic mind its most valuable and indeed its distinctive feature, so we may imagine Kheyyam, whilst having his belief, at bottom, firmly anchored in the great fundamental ideas of Vedantic Pantheism, to have been swayed hither and thither upon the sea of detail and daily practice by the shifting breezes of the poet's fantasy, ever "full of most excellent differences," and the doubts and moods which are inseparable from mortal existence. Like Hamlet, he was ever in suspense between the imperious demands of his conscience and the energies of his will, which still urged him to action, and the critical influence of his profound intelligence and his searching wit, which led him to the ultimate conviction of the uselessness of all action. Between these two points, the positive and negative poles of the human machine, his humour sports like the electric flash; and the absolute and inconsolable despair, which underlies his clamorous Epicureanism and his satirical extravagance, is only made more poignant by the play of that "tragic power of

laughter" which was so prominent a feature of his nature and which is seldom absent from the greatest intelligences; nor can one sum up his character, as it manifests itself to us from the pages of the only work (his Quatrains) which he seems to have cared to preserve for posterity, more tersely or more aptly than in the pregnant words with which the greatest critic the world has ever known apostrophizes his intellectual brother, the Prince of Denmark :—" Tu as le vertige de la vie, ce rêve d'une ombre. D'où vient on ? Où va-t-on ? Pourquoi naître ? Pourquoi mourir ? Ces allées, ces venues, ces entrées, ces sorties, que signifie tout cela ? Est-ce une tragédie ? Est-ce une farce ? L'univers n'est-il que le cauchemar d'un dieu malade, le délire de l'éternité ivre d'infini ?—Au milieu de toutes ces brutes qui se croient des hommes, parce qu'elles ne broutent pas et se tiennent sur leurs pieds de derrière, toi, le seul qui penses, qui aies le sentiment de l'étrangeté de la vie et qui avances en tremblant sur cette mince lame de rasoir, sur cet imperceptible fil d'araignée qu'on nomme le présent, ayant de chaque côté un gouffre, le passé et l'avenir, l'un qui t'a déjà englouti, l'autre qui t'engloutira demain, pauvre KHEYYAM,¹ tu es obligé d'attacher à ta sagesse les grelots de la folie et de cacher ton inconsolable anxiété sous une bizarrerie apparente ! " ²

¹ The text, of course, has "Hamlet." "L'aria dice Giannina; ma lo dico Rosina," as Dr. Bartolo says.

² Théophile Gautier, *Hist. de l'Art Dramatique en France*, iii, 324-5.

III.

Of the existing editions (under which name I include, for brevity's sake, translations and paraphrases generally) of the Rubaiyat, four only call for notice; and of these, the German translation of Herr Bodenstedt, which is generally considered to be the most scholarly and on the whole the most adequate, it is unnecessary to do more than mention, as it hardly comes within the scope of the English reading public. The variorum edition of the Persian text of 500 Quatrains published in 1880 by Mr. Whinfield, although disfigured by some errors of the press, which might have been avoided by a more careful correction of the proof-sheets, is valuable as the conscientious work of a capable and painstaking scholar, and the Introduction neatly and unpretentiously summarizes most of the available information concerning Khëyyam's life and work; but the appended metrical translation does not (to say the least of it) add to the value of the publication and can scarcely be called either adequate or elegant. The edition of M. Nicolas (1867), on the other hand, is a somewhat slovenly reprint of an inferior text published at Teheran and comprising 463 Quatrains; the notes are for the most part insignificant, when they are not valueless and (at times) even ridiculous, and the prose translation printed in face of the Persian text is exceedingly loose and incorrect. In brief, M. Nicolas' work is only one more instance of the common error of supposing that the *colloquial* knowledge of a language is sufficient, without

other literary equipment, to enable the possessor to deal with difficult literary enterprises of translation, etc.: an error of which salient examples are afforded by Mr. E. W. Lane's Selections from the Arabian Nights, made at a time when he had little or no *literary* knowledge of the Arabic language and consequently swarming with errors and mistakes of all kinds, (of which I myself noted, on a cursory perusal, some fifteen hundred and of which many more would no doubt be brought to light by a more minute examination,) still left uncorrected by subsequent editors in the last edition (1877) of the work with which I am acquainted; as well as by the complete translation of the same collection by my late friend, Sir Richard Burton, who, although (to say nothing of his extraordinary qualities as a man of action, in which capacity we must go back to the age of Drake and Raleigh to find his parallel,) a man of incomparably higher intellectual gifts and general culture than Mr. Lane, had no sufficient acquaintance with *literary* Arabic and was almost entirely destitute of that saving grace of literary faculty and intuition without which, in undertakings of the kind, (*Non haec sine numine!*) all other qualifications are but as sounding brass and tinkling cymbals. He possessed, it is true, a considerable knowledge of Oriental customs and had, in particular, the immense advantage over Mr. Lane of the use of my previously-issued translation of the whole of the 1001 Nights, which he followed, in the main, closely and from which he again and again borrowed whole pages in difficult passages, such as are of frequent occurrence in the work; but, in the case of the two

stories of Zein ul Asnam and Alaeddin (the Arabic text of which was only discovered by M. Zotenberg in 1887), he was obliged to rely upon his own resources, unaided by my translation, the corresponding volume of which was not issued till 1889; and the result was, as the Arabs say, "A warning to those who will take warning," his version of these two stories containing some five hundred blunders of the most unqualified description, as may be ascertained by any competent Arabic scholar who will take the pains to compare it with the original and with my translation, where I have indicated the passages in question by italicized quotations in the notes.¹

¹ It is, I need hardly say, with much reluctance that I bring myself to break the silence which I have hitherto, under circumstances of great provocation, maintained upon this point, out of respect for the memory of one who was my intimate and esteemed friend: but there is a limit to all things and the assumption, (founded upon no technical knowledge nor indeed upon any other ground than that of Capt. Burton's great reputation as a traveller in the East and a man *colloquially* well acquainted with Oriental languages,) which is becoming daily more prevalent among journalists and others, that his translation of the Arabian Nights must of necessity be more correct than my own, no less than the mendacious spirit which is abroad in these as in many other matters, has at last made it imperative upon me to speak out, thus tardily, both in my own defence and in the interest of the reading public. I should perhaps even now have hesitated to do so (from one's enemies one can defend oneself and I have ever been accustomed to overpass, with silent contempt, "the gross inventions of malignant dulness" and "the harebrained chatter of irresponsible frivolity"); but it is hard to put up with misjudgment and misapprehension from one's friends, and especially at the hands of so sincere and loyal a well-wisher and admirer as Dr. Richard Garnett, whose remark, (made in all honesty and innocence,) in vol. viii of Milnes's Poets and Poetry of the Century, that "considering Sir Richard Burton's long practice in *colloquial* Arabic, his version of the Arabian Nights must in all probability be more accurate than Mr. Payne's," was the last straw that broke the back of the camel of my patience. Dr. Garnett's argument might have some cogency

The fourth and last of the notable editions of the Rubaiyat and in every respect (in view of its intrinsic poetical merit and of the widespread popularity which it has, since the author's death, acquired, both in England and America) the most important of the four, is that of the late Mr. Edward Fitzgerald, of whose version (or rather paraphrase) my opinion is so exactly expressed in the prospectus of the present work issued by the Villon Society that I cannot do better than reproduce the

in reference to the translation of a newspaper or a modern novel, but is altogether inapplicable to the case of a collection like the *Nights*, which contains many thousand lines of verse, some more than a thousand years old, and the average age of whose contents is at least five centuries. The fact is, indeed, exactly the contrary of that which Dr. Garnett and others assume. Capt. Burton's knowledge of literary Arabic, the qualification most needed for the successful accomplishment of the task in question, was, (as he himself, like the high-minded and honourable man he was, freely admitted on becoming acquainted with my work,) much inferior to my own and consequently his translation, and especially that part in which, as above stated, he had not the advantage of being able to guide himself by my previous version, is *far less accurate* than mine. No one is of course exempt from liability to error and mistakes must of necessity occur in the translation of an excessively difficult work like the *Nights*, executed pioneer-fashion, without any kind of assistance and at a time when Arabic dictionaries were both rare and miserably incomplete; but I have no hesitation in asserting, without fear of authoritative contradiction, that *my version is far more accurate than any other in existence*, French, English or German, and that, for every mistake which can be discovered in my work, it were easy to point out at least a dozen in those of Lane and Burton. I may add that I shall probably one day publish, as a curious chapter of literary history, the detailed story of my translation of the *Nights* and of the desperate and unscrupulous efforts of certain cliques, whose interests it threatened, to suppress, or at least to crush, it, efforts which happily, thanks to some remnant of discernment on the part of the reading public, proved entirely futile; as well as of my connection with Sir Richard Burton and the circumstances which led him, consequently upon the brilliant success of my version, to undertake a new one on his own account.

paragraph which refers to it and which runs as follows: "Mr. Fitzgerald's elegant paraphrase of a small portion (about one-eighth¹) of the whole, although a charming poem which will always, on its own merits, retain its place in English literature, is so exceedingly loose, and often indeed so extravagantly wide of the mark, that it affords practically no idea of the original; and the other translations which exist, whilst a little more exact, are wholly destitute of the poetical charm which makes the earlier version, with all its shortcomings, dear to the lover of poetry." To this I may add that, with all my appreciation of the beauties of Mr. Fitzgerald's work, (and I have been its sincere admirer since the day, nearly thirty years ago, when I purchased the second edition, then utterly neglected, for a few pence from a bookstall,) it seems to me to have of late years been somewhat extravagantly overpraised and I confess that I cannot but regard as deplorable that lack of the sense of proportion, (a lack, alas! characteristic of our hysterical modern society,) which leads a certain class of literary dilettanti to speak of Mr. Fitzgerald, elegant and charming versifier as he was, as a "great poet" and to even him with his really great original. If we are to lavish such supreme titles of honour upon the Ganymedes and Hebes, the acolytes and torchbearers of Parnassus, what resources will remain to us for the fitting qualification of the monarchs of our modern Pantheon, of such paramount Olympians as Hugo, Gautier, Leconte de Lisle, Swinburne, Matthew Arnold? *Hcu!*

¹ This is overstated; the true proportion is about one-sixteenth.

Nimia illæc licentia ! "As for us," we can only say with Villon, "God give us patience!"; whilst for those who deal in such extravagances, at the bidding of that "deformed thief" Fashion, "Navigent Anticyram!" A course of hellebore is certainly indicated by the symptoms.

It remains to justify the assertion, above cited, that Mr. Fitzgerald's paraphrase affords no adequate idea of the original; and this, I think, there will be little difficulty in doing. The book entitled "*Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám of Naishápúr*"¹ rendered into English verse," printed anonymously but afterwards acknowledged to be by Mr. Edward Fitzgerald, in its enlarged form of a second issue, published in 1868 and generally considered to be the standard edition of the work, contains 110 Quatrains, of which it is possible, though with difficulty, to identify some forty as being, after a fashion, "rendered" from the original Persian. "Disjecta membra," detached thoughts and phrases from others of Kheyyam's Rubaiyat, are indeed to be here and there discovered by those well

¹ There are half-a-dozen variations of the name of Omar's birthplace: i.e., Nishapour, Nishapour, Nishabour, Nishabour, Neishapour and Neisabour. The first (*Nishapour*) is the correct and authoritative form and is generally derived from Old Pers. *Nih*, a city, and *Shapour* (*Shah-pour*, son of the king), the great Sasani prince of the third century, i.e. Nih-i-Shapour, the City of Shapour, he having rebuilt the ancient Aryan town destroyed by Alexander the Great; but the name is much more likely to be a corruption of the primitive Aryan *Nissa-pura*, from *Nissa* or *Nesa*, the original name of the district, and Sanscrit *Pura*, a city. The form *Neishapour* is based on the somewhat trivial idea that the city was called after the reeds (*Nai*, a reed,) which are said to have covered its site, before its rebuilding by Shapour, and *Neisabour* is the Arabic corruption of *Neishapour*, as *Nushabour* of *Nishapour*.

acquainted with the originals *rari nantes* in the vast whirlpool of Fitzgeraldian periphrasis upon which they have been launched by the English author; but the remaining seventy quatrains of the paraphrase have but a vague connection with Kheyyam's work and can only fairly be described, by borrowing from musical terminology, as a "Meditation sur des motifs d'Omar Kheyyam." To make matters worse, Mr. Fitzgerald arranged his hundred and ten quatrains, "rendered," imitated and original,—which (so far as they can be said to belong to the Persian poet) were intended, as is evident to the most casual student of the latter's work, to be considered each as a separate and independent whole,—after an arbitrary fashion of his own, "stringing them," as he says, "into something of an eclogue," thus substituting his own idea of their collective tenour for that of Kheyyam himself and still further obscuring our view of the latter's general conception, already sufficiently veiled by the arbitrary alphabetical arrangement before (see p. xxxvii) referred to. To enable the reader to form his own opinion of the fidelity to the original of Mr. Fitzgerald's rendering, I subjoin half a score of his "identifiable" quatrains, taken from the 1868 edition, side by side with a literal prose version of the corresponding Rubaiyat. The selected quatrains may be taken as a fair and even favourable specimen of those which can be referred to their originals, whilst the remainder (or nearly two-thirds) of the paraphrase is too loose and too much obscured as to identity by Mr. Fitzgerald's additions, alterations and retrenchments to admit of confrontation with any part of the Persian text.

FITZGERALD.

They say the Lion and the Lizard
 keep The courts where Jemshyd
 gloried and drank deep; And
 Bahram, that great Hunter—the
 Wild Ass Stamps o'er his Head,
 but cannot break his Sleep.

What; without asking, hither hurried
Whence? And, without asking,
Whither hurried hence! Ah, con-
 trite Heav'n endowed us with the
 Vine, To drug the memory of that
 insolence.

Some for the Glories of This World;
 and some Sigh for the Prophet's
 Paradise to come; Ah, take the
 Cash, and let the Promise go, Nor
 heed the music of a distant Drum!

We are no other than a moving row
 Of visionary Shapes that come and
 go Round with this Sun-illumin'd
 Lantern held In Midnight by the
 Master of the Show.

Impotent Pieces of the Game He
 plays Upon this Chequer-board of
 Nights and Days; Hither and thither
 moves, and checks, and slays; And
 one by one back in the Closet lays.

LITERAL TRANSLATION.

That palace wherein Behram took
 the cup, The deer fawneth and the
 lion taketh rest; Behram, who still
 used to take the *Gowr* (Wild Ass)
 with the lasso, Thou seest on what
 wise the *Gowr* (Tomb) hath taken
 Behram.

Since my coming with me was not
 the First Day And this going without
 will of intent [to depart] is, Arise
 and gird thy middle, O cupbearer!
 Quick! For the cark of the world
 with wine I will to wash away.

When they say to me, "Banqueting
 with the Houris is good," I say that
 the juice of the grape is good. This
 ready-money [of present enjoyment]
 take and hold hand from that
 promise-to-pay [of future bliss];
 For [even] the noise of the drum to
 hear from afar is good.

This sphere of the firmament,
 wherein we are amazed, The Chinese
 lantern I think a likeness of it; The
 sun the lamp-stand and the world
 the lantern; We like the figures are
 that in it revolve.

We are the pieces and Heaven (i.e.
 Fortune) the player, by way of
 certainty and not by way of meta-
 phor. We make a little play on the
 board of Being [And] go back to the
 box of nonentity one by one.

FITZGERALD.

Said one—"Folks of a surly Master
tell And daub his Visage with the
Smoke of Hell ; They talk of some
sharp trial of us—Pish ! He's a Good
Fellow, and 't will all be well."

Then ev'n my buried Ashes such
a snare Of Vintage shall fling up
into the Air As not a true-believer
passing by But shall be overtaken
unaware.

Indeed, indeed, Repentance oft
before I swore—but was I sober
when I swore ? And then and then
came Spring, and Rose-in-hand My
thread-bare Penitence apieces tore.

I tell you this—When, started from
the Goal, Over the flaming aboulders
of the Foal of Heav'n Parwin and
Mushtari they flung In my pre-
destined Plot of Dust and Soul.

For those who husbanded the Golden
grain And those who flung it to the
winds like Rain, Alike to no such
aureate earth are turned As, buried
once, Men want dug up again.

LITERAL TRANSLATION.

They say, at the Rising talk-and-
prate (turmoil, trouble) will be And
that Dear Friend hard-natured
(morose, cantankerous,) will be.
From Absolute Good except good
cometh not. Be of good heart, for
the end good will be.

So much wine will I drink that the
scent of wine shall come from the
dust when I go under the dust.
When over the earth of me arriveth
a crop-sick one, By my wine-scent
he shall become dead-drunk.

Every day I purpose to repent at
night, Repent from winecup and
brimming goblet. Now that the
time of the rose is come, vouchsafe
me renouncement, In the season of
the rose, from repentance, O Lord,
repentance !

That day when the courser of heaven
They made ready and established
Mushtari and Perwin [in the sky],
This was our portion from the
chancery of Fate Foreordained.
What blame then is ours ? Our lot
thus They made.

Before that sorrows make a night-
attack [on thee,] Command that
rose-coloured wine they bring.
Thou art not gold, O heedless
know-nothing, that thee In the earth
they lay and again bring forth !

These citations might, but for considerations of space, be multiplied fourfold; but the above will, I doubt not, suffice to convince my readers that Mr. Fitzgerald's poem (however charming it may be, and I myself, as I have before said, freely admit its charm, as intrinsic poetry) is in no way entitled to be called a translation of the Rubaiyat. To paraphrase Dr. Johnson's pronouncement on Pope's Iliad, "It is a pretty poem, but not Omar [Kheyyam]." Had it been frankly put forward as a paraphrase of certain portions of the original, a "free fantasia" upon selected themes of Kheyyam, there would have been nothing left to say or to do but to accept it with gratitude as a notable addition, in its way, to English poetry; but, to propound such a medley of imitation, variation and sheer invention as a "rendering into English verse" of the Persian text is enough to make old Omar turn in his grave. After all, (strange as it may sound in these degenerate days of "log-rolling" and "Press-nobbling,") there is such a thing as literary conscience; "ein Schelm," says the German proverb, "giebt mehr als er hat"; and agreeable as undoubtedly is the result of Mr. Fitzgerald's manipulation of the Rubaiyat, ("c'est peut-être magnifique, mais ce n'est pas la traduction!") I confess that I cannot, for my part, but regard the process as something of a sin against literary morality.

IV.

For the purposes of the ensuing translation, I have taken as my standard text the Lucknow Lithograph of the Rubaiyat, which

not only contains more quatrains, but is, in my judgment, more carefully edited than any other and has a running Persian commentary, blurred and scrawled in all directions upon its margins,

“Over it, under, round it every side,

“Nay, in and out the verses and the lines,”

and occasionally (contrary to the usage of the Commentator tribe) throwing some little light upon a doubtful passage, as may be seen from my notes, where such crumbs of assistance are acknowledged. This standard text I have minutely collated with a number of others, printed, lithographed and manuscript, with the result of clearing up some obscure passages and adding numerous variants and some fourscore quatrains to the 762 of the Lucknow edition. The text thus composed doubtless contains a good many quatrains which are probably not by Kheyyam;¹ but I have thought it better to include in this, the first complete translation, everything that is, on fair authority, attributed to him, rather than commit myself to the very delicate and doubtful responsibility of deciding, at this late period of time and upon such insufficient data as are alone available, the question of what is genuine and what spurious, a task which, after the lapse of so many hundred years and in the

¹ Since the text of my translation was printed, I find that I was quite right in supposing (see note 2 to Quat. 335) the “Bang” Quatrain (No. 450) to be “probably a spurious interpolation of later date.” According to Lutf Ali Beg, it is the composition of the royal poet, Melik Shemseddin Muhammed Kert the First, King of Herat, who died A.D. 1278 or more than a hundred and fifty years after Kheyyam.

present rudimentary state of Persian bibliography, would indeed be brickmaking without straw. At all events, it seems to me that the great majority of the quatrains here given are thoroughly worthy and characteristic of the great author to whom they are ascribed and bear, indeed, for the most part, in unmistakable signs, the stamp and imprint of his intellect and his genius; and with this (suspicious though we may justly be of the Oriental tendency to concentrate upon the head of a single hero the literary, no less than the historical, laurels which belong to a period or a race) we may well content ourselves for the present.

V.

A brief statement of the prosodical peculiarities of the form chosen by Kheyyam for the poetical expression of his ideas will doubtless be acceptable to the general reader. The *Rubaiyi* or Foursome Stanza (Quatrain) consists of four lines, the first, second and fourth of which end with the same rhyme, whilst the third is commonly left unrhymed, although all four not unfrequently rhyme together. It is written in various metres, at the fancy of the poet, and the third line is often (especially when unrhymed) in a different metre from that of the three others. But the especial peculiarity of the *Rubaiyi* (and indeed of Persian poetry generally) is the intricacy of the rhyme-scheme and in particular the prevalence of that form which I may call, for want of a better name, the "throw-back"

rhyme and which characterizes the majority of the Quatrains attributed to Kheyyam. This consists in what is technically called a *radif* or "rereword," i.e., of an invariable ending of from one to seven syllables, not, in general, of the nature of a burden or refrain independent of the rest of the line, but forming the final and inseparable part of the three rhyming lines, (as also of the fourth, when rhymed,) and following immediately upon the rhyme-word, which it thus *throws back* towards, and in some cases even beyond, the middle of the line. The following specimen of a "throw-back" quatrain, in which, for the sake of clearness, the rhyme-word is printed in small capitals and the rereword in italics, will show the nature of this form. It will be noted that the example given is a four-rhyme quatrain.

45. Skinker, since ruin is of Fortune *PLANNED for thee and me*,
 This nether world is no abiding *LAND for thee and me*;
 Yet, so the winecup in the midst but *STAND for thee and me*,
 Rest thou assured the very Truth's in *HAND for thee and me*.

Several other peculiar rhyme-forms will be found in the text; e.g., the Interior Rhyme (Q. 331), the Counter-petard (Qq. 547 and 603), the Ding-dong Rhyme (Q. 667), and the Echo Rhyme (Q. 669). The most curious form of all will be found at p. 187, where a double rhyme occurs at the *beginning* of the three rhyming lines of Quatrain 770.

The translator of poetry can hardly hope to give any adequate idea of the original, except he pay particular attention to the

reproduction, not only of the matter, but of the manner of the poet's work and especially of the metrical form, which is indeed for the poet "the garment thou seest him by." I have accordingly endeavoured, in rendering the several Quatrains, to imitate the different rhythms in so far as seemed to me consistent with the requirements of English literary form and the avoidance of the constant use of quantitative signs, always destructive of the reader's enjoyment and foreign to the genius of our language; and I have, in particular, strictly followed the varying and complicated rhyme-schemes to which I have above referred. The lover of poetry and the connoisseur of metrical form will appreciate the immense difficulties of such an undertaking and will, I think, find the unusual shape in which they are cast no hindrance, but rather an assistance to the apprehension and enjoyment of the ideas, by turns sublime, pathetic and humorous, of the great Persian poet. To others than these the oracles of poetry will be mute, charm they never so wisely: in the words of Khayyam's great successor and imitator, "Only the bird of the dawn¹ knoweth the worth of the compend² of the rose; not everyone who readeth a leaf apprehendeth the meaning thereof."³

¹ i.e. the nightingale.

² i.e. book.

³ Hafiz, lxxvi, 2.

THE QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHEYYAM.

1. There came from out our winehouse a call at break of day :
"Ho, topers ! Tavern-haunters ! Ho, madcaps !" it did say ;
"Up, up, that we the measure with wine may fill, ere THEY¹
(The Fates, to wit) *our* measure fill up and cast away !"²

¹ "i.e. Fate and Fortune foreordained."—*Lucknow Commentator*.

² i.e. before the fulfilment of the appointed term of our life.

2. An if thou drink no wine, rail not at those who do.
Did God vouchsafe, I'd turn, repenting, Him unto.
Thou vauntest thee, forsooth, saying, "I drink no wine !"
An hundred things thou dost, that wine is nothing¹ to.²

¹ Lit. "boy, servant." ² i.e. things that are far worse than drinking ;
apparently addressed to some one who exhorted him to renounce wine.

3. When the Maker of water and earth did us create,
Abject dependants He made us on woeful Fate.
Why still forbid us from drinking ?¹ An empty hand²
'S forbiddal enough for us, at any rate !

¹ To an exhorter to repentance.

² i.e. poverty.

4. Since none for the morrow thy warrant will be,
 Give thy sorrowful soul for the present to glee ;
 Drink wine in the moonlight, O Moon,¹ for the moon
 Will shine yet full often nor find thee and me.

¹ Moon, i.e. moon-faced beauty ; addressed to the cupbearer or the beloved

5. O THOU, whose love and wrath created all that be,
 Who madest Heaven and Hell from all eternity,
 'Tis well for me *my* Heaven in Spring's delight consists
 And wine, for there's no way to t' other Heaven for me.

6. To the idolater¹ quoth the idol²: "Servant mine,
 Knowest thou how thou becamest adorer fervent mine ?
 'Tis that with HIS own beauty hath HE transfigured me
 Who in thy person witness³ is and observant mine."⁴

¹ Lover.

² Fair one, beloved.

³ Syn. lover or beloved (*shakid*).

⁴ A very obscure quatrain, of which the meaning appears to be that human beauty is but a reflex of the Divine.

7. Thou knowest, for all thou hast left me so long without sign,
 O charmer, that ne'er hast thou quitted this bosom of mine !
 Yet no one thou sendest nor askest ever of what
 Hath passed o'er my head, since here in thine absence I pine.¹

¹ A complaint of the beloved's neglect.

8. Wine is the food of the body and the food of the spright for me;
 My solver of secrets, that bringeth the hidden to light for me :
 Nought in this life and the other I seek but the juice of the grape,
 Whose every beaker is brimming with both worlds' delight for me.

9. Where is the smoke of our fire ?¹ Say, where is it here ?²
 And our capital's profit³ where ? Yea, where is it here ?
 To him who gives me the name of tavern-harbourer say,
 Where was the tavern in truth aye ?⁴ Where is it here ?⁴

¹ i.e. the trace of our actions. ² i.e. in this world. ³ i.e. the result of our striving. ⁴ *Der urs*, which may mean either "in the origin, originally," or "ever," or, again, "in truth, essentially." ⁵ A very obscure quatrain, meaning apparently that the ecstatic's kingdom is not of this world.

10. Arise, come solace my heart with thy soft, caressing sway
 And loosen the bonds of doubt with thy beauty from me away :
 Go, get me a gugglet of wine, that we may drink and be gay,
 Or ever the potters fashion gugglets out of our clay.

11. When once I am dead, with wine for water bestreak ye me ;
 For last monition,¹ of wine and winecup bespeak ye me :
 An if ye would find me again on the Resurrection morning,
 In the dust of the tavern threshold prithce seek ye me.

¹ *Telkin*, the instructions whispered in the ear of the dead, immediately before burial, reminding him how he is to answer the examining angels, when they visit him in the tomb.

12. Wine's ruby's the jewel¹ become of this soul of mine ;
 No breath but with grief the goblet I resign :
 For the oceans of wine on the top of wine I've drunk,
 A-top o' me's wine and I on the top of wine.²

¹ Syn. essence, i.e. my very soul. ² i.e., I've drunk so much wine that I know not which is wine and which myself. This last line recalls one of the furious onslaughts of Soudi, the Turkish commentator of Hafiz, upon the would-be Soufyzers of the greatest of Persian poets, as staunch an anti-Soufi as his predecessor and exemplar, Kheyyam himself. The crabbed, but honest and keen-sighted old Bosnian tells the obscurantist in question (Shimei or Serouri?), who has blunderingly mistaken *me* (myself) for *mei* (wine), the distinction between which two words consists in diacritical points, that he knows not the difference between "myself" and "wine," i.e., by implication, that he is habitually blind-drunk.

13. Joy, for loss of thee, all is turned to sorrow ;
 For the tristful heart is no glad to-morrow :
 With thee the world's bitter I was wont to sweeten ;
 'Gainst thy loss's bitter, sweet whence shall I borrow ?

14. Though beauty and colour and fragrance fair and fine,
 Though cheek like the tulip and shape like the cypress be mine,
 Meknoweth not wherefore the Graver All-Divine
 Hath 'stablished me thus in this gladsome earthly shrine.¹

¹ Lit. "this pleasure-house of earth." The expression is, of course, ironical. The quatrain appears to be put in the mouth of the beloved.

15. For God's sake, with what hope, in this our world of woe,
 Can heedless¹ man his heart upon its good bestow?
 No sooner doth he sit him down to rest than, lo!
 Death grips him by the hand and bids him rise and go.

¹ Var. "reasonable."

16. O pedant,¹ grant us this one boon; give o'er thy prate;
 Leave us to settle our affairs with God Most Great.
 God wot, we go aright; 't is thou that seest askew:
 Go, medicine thine eyes and let us gang our gait.

¹ *Khawajeh*, professor, doctor of theology, orthodox Muslim teacher; addressed to some "argle-bargling" zealot.

17. Would God might lovers still intoxicated be!
 Love-frenzied and distraught and reprobated¹ be!
 Sober, the whole world's woes and suff'rings we devour;
 But, when we're drunk, it is, "Let what is fated be!"

¹ It is one of the glories of the true "lover," the servant of the ideal, to be a reprobate in the eyes of the profane.

18. Skinker, a cup, for the helper, indeed, is God!
 Of His mercy, gracious to all that plead is God!
 Drink wine in the Spring nor the load of obedience bear:
 Of the creature's obedience nowise in need is God.

19. Skinker, a glance on the friendless bestow, for God His sake!
 Quench thou our hearts' fond fever-glow, for God His sake!
 Moonstruck and dead are we; with thine enjoyment do thou
 The water of life for us cause flow, for God His sake!

20. The Koran, though The Word Sublime folk style it,
 But here and there they read and once-a-while it:
 Upon the cup-marge there's a bright verse written,
 All-where-and-when folk read, though some revile it.

21. O thou, of all creation the chosen part to me!
 O goodlier than eyesight and soul and heart to me!
 There's nought than life more precious, O idol mine; and yet
 An hundred times more precious than life thou art to me!

22. To-night to drunken me who was it brought thee?
 From the harem to the lea who was it brought thee?
 Tow'rs him who, lacking thee, as fire is, when the wind
 Brings up the scent of thee, who was it brought thee?

23. An if thou wilt, for severance in tribulation hold me;
 Or, if thou wilt, for union in jubilation hold me:
 I bid thee not on this or t' other fashion hold me;
 According to and after thy heart's dictation hold me.

24. In all this time that here we've tarried, nought but care,
 Misfortune and chagrin hath fallen to our share :
 Alas ! with all our doubts unsolved, to death we fare ;
 A thousand vain regrets at heart with us we bear.

25. Inasmuch as thou may'st, with vexation beset thou not any ;
 On the fire of thy rancour, I counsel thee, set thou not any :
 So ease everlasting thou fain would'st have fall to thy portion,
 Thyself fret thou still, but other folk fret thou not any.

26. Whenever in hand the brimming winecup I take,
 Dead-drunken I wax for very ecstasy's sake ;
 Wonders an hundred of every sort I make ;
 This fire-like temper¹ to words like water I wake.

¹ It is doubtful whether the poet means here his own nature or that of wine, which latter he continually compares to fire. In the latter case, the meaning would be, "From wine, which in its nature is as fire, words like water (i.e. a flood of words) proceed."

27. Wine on such sort I'll tipple, the fumes thereof shall rise
 Out of my dust, when buried beneath the dust it lies ;
 Yea, if some half-primed toper should stumble o'er my clay,
 Dead-drunk my ashes' odour shall make him in a trice.

28. Here in this ruined corner,¹ with wine and wanton met,
 Hope,² heart and soul and substance in pawn for wine we've set;
 No hopes of mercy lure us nor fears of judgment fret;
 Of earth, air, fire and water³ we're quit and all their lot.

¹ i.e. the winehouse. Wine being prohibited by the Mohammedan law, the taverns were, upon the installation of Islam as the state religion of Persia, clandestinely established in out-of-the-way places, such as ruins of old buildings, and especially in the deserted temples of the Magians or fire-worshippers (hence the common name for tavern, *kherabat*, "ruins"); and the sectaries of the old religion, being unbound by the prohibitions of the new faith, appear to have commonly acted as vintners and tavern-keepers. Hence the expressions, "wine of the Magians," "cup of the Magians," etc. ² Syn. eye. ³ i.e. the four elements, the care of worldly things in general.

29. Here in this ruined corner, with cup and minstrel and friend,
 Soul, heart, religion, reason in change for wine we spend;
 Head within head there turneth and wine a-top of wine
 Buildeth: the house abideth but bubbles in the end.

30. To kiss thy foot's better, O lamp of delight,
 Than the lip-kiss of ever another wight;
 My hand on the skirt of thine image all day,
 And my foot shall ensue thine enjoyment all night.

31. Quoth the fish to the duck, when the brook was dry for the heat,
 "It may be the water will turn to its ancient seat."
 "Ay," quoth the duck, "when thou and I are roast meat:
 What care I, when dead, be't river or m'rage¹ be't?"

¹ *Serab*; var. *sharab*, wine.

32. Since life's but a three days' fryst, drink wine unmingled aye;
 For know that, the present once past, thou wilt never bring it to bay.
 Thou knowest the things of the world to downfall and ruin tend;
 Ruined,¹ to wit, dead-drunken, be thou, then, night and day.

¹ *Kherab*, "ruined," Persian id. for "dead-drunk"; generally *maet o kherab*, "drunk and ruined."

33. We've written ourselves for vassals in the muster-roll of wine;
 We've given our lives to ransom for the laughing soul of wine;
 For ever conjoined, O skinker, our throats and the gugglet are,
 Our lips and the beads that spangle the brim of the bowl of wine.

34. In suppliant fashion all hearts I rede thee gain;
 A friend at the court¹ in time of need thee gain:
 An hundred Meccas outweigh not a single heart:
 Then why go thither? A heart with speed thee gain.²

¹ Lit. "a favourable one in the quarter of presence." *Macbill* (probably a dialectic variant of *macbulla*, an accepted one, *persona grata*) *der kowl-i-Ahdowar*. ² i.e., busy thyself not with religious observances, such as the pilgrimage to Mecca, but study to gain hearts.

35. Since all that is in hand is nought but air,
 Since all is nought but ruin and despair,
 Think all that is is *not*, and whatsoe'er
 In this our world is *not*, think it *is* there.¹

¹ The Vedantic doctrine of the MAYA or World-fiction is here evidently referred to.

36. Pottle and skinker and cup by marge of lea,
 These things are heaven enough for thee and me :
 Hark not from any the prate of heaven and hell,
 Or come from heaven or bound to hell he be.

37. If no rose be vouchsafed us, the thorn is enough;
 The night, if we fail of the morn, is enough :
 If chaplet and prayer-rug and sheikhhood we lack,
 The church-gong¹ and girdle² monk-worn is enough.

¹ The Mohammedan authorities very properly put a veto on the church-bell-ringing nuisance, so that the beautiful Eastern Christian, the pet of Lord Salisbury, Bishop Percival, Canon McColl and the Bean-bag party generally ("Sweet blighted lily!" as Carlyle would have called him), is obliged to content himself with banging upon a sort of wooden gong called *nacous*.
O si sis omnes! ² The distinctive sign of the Christian in the East.

38. Since certitude of truth can never be our share,
 Why sit and waste our lives 'twixt hoping and despair?
 For me, from out my hand I'll set the winecup ne'er:
 In ecstasy where's drunk and where is sober? Where?¹

¹ I.e., in the state of ecstatic unconsciousness or objectivation to which it is the aim of the Oriental mystic to attain by drinking, drunk and sober are idle names.

39. Since to-morrow's conquest to-day to be wrought is not,
 Thy thought for the morrow save madness aught is not:
 Nay, waste not the time, if thy heart distraught is not,
 For this remnant of life for price to be bought is not.

40. Fair usance, O my heart, of Time and Fate seek not ;
 From Fortune's changes wealth and high estate seek not ;
 Seekst thou to salve thy pain, it doth but greater grow :
 Submit thee to endure, and to abate seek not.

41. O Wheel of Fortune, ruin from thy despite is ;
 From time eternal thine usance still unright is :
 O earth, in sunder if they should cleave thy bosom,
 Full many a gem there buried out of sight is.

42. Since she, for whose sweet sake my heart afire's become,
 Captive herself elsewhere to anguish dire's become,
 Ah ! whither shall I look for healing of my pain,
 Since she, my leach, herself sick with desire's become ?

43. In whosoever heart the lamp of love is lit,
 Whose name in Passion's Scroll the Eternal Hand hath writ,
 Whether in mosque or church or synagogue he sit,
 From fear of Hell and hope of Paradise he's quit.¹

¹ The Vedantist sage is free from fear and hope and has learned the unreality of religions.

44. To this time in whose lapses our coming and going is,
 Patent end nor beginning nor ebbing nor flowing is ;¹
 On *this* point none utt'reth a word that truth-showing is ;
 Whence we come, whither bounden we are, there no knowing is.

¹ According to the Vedas, the world, being an illusive projection from the Eternal Self, has neither beginning nor ending.

45. Skinker, since ruin is of Fortune planned for thee and me,
 This nether world is no abiding-land for thee and me ;
 Yet, so the winecup in the midst but stand for thee and me,
 Rest thou assured the very Truth's¹ in hand for thee and me.

¹ Truth, *Alac*, one of the names of God.

46. We are the Pariahs of Love; the Musulman elsewhere is :
 We are the impotent ant ;¹ the Suleiman elsewhere is :
 Seek of us sallow cheeks and raiment tattered and worn ;
 Marry, the mart and bazaar of the silk-selling² clan elsewhere is.

¹ Alluding to the Muslim legend of Solomon and the ant ("the least of all creatures," says Tabari); v. Koran, xxvii, 15. The ant and Solomon are constantly cited by Oriental poets and prose-writers as types of the infinitely little and infinitely great respectively, as in above quatrain. ² Syn. "silk-boasting."

47. Wine to drink and to live merry, still my usance it is ;
 And my faith of faith and unfaith ever to be quit is.
 "What's thy dowry?" of the world-bride¹ asked I, and she
 answered:

"Lo, my dowry all the gladness of thy heart and wit is."²

¹ I.e. "world," simply. ² I.e., whose would gain the goods of the world must offer up the gladness of his heart and submit to chew the bitter cud of care ; in modern parlance, he who would make money must think of nothing else, must eat, drink and sleep money.

48. Secrets from the mean of spright secret should be kept ;
 Myst'ries from the witless wight secret should be kept :
 How thou deal'st with men, indeed, look thou have a care ;
 Heart and soul from all men's sight secret should be kept.

49. The myst'ry of life, in the book of our soul as it writ is,
 We may not disclose, a sin 'gainst our secret for it is :
 Midst ignorant men since no one for confidant fit is,
 Not all can be told that hid in our thought and our wit is. ✓

50. In the month of Shebán, unlawful, they say, to drink wine is ;
 And eke in Rejéb, for that month in especial divine is:
 Since Shebán and Rejéb are private to God and His prophet,
 In the Fast-tide I'll drink, for Ramazan private o' mine is.¹

¹ *Rjeb*, *SA'aban* and *Ramadran*, the seventh, eighth and ninth months of the Muslim year. The last is the well-known Fast-month.

51. When I am sober, lacking life in mirth is,
 And when I'm drunk, 't is in my wit the dearth is :
 But there's a state betwixten drunk and sober,
 The name of life for me which only worth is.

52. Fill up of that wine which new life to the old is,
 Though thy head ache ; I pine till the cup in my hold is.
 Quick ! the need of the world as a tale that is told is
 And life on the lapse with the wind on the wold is.

53. If cursed with abiding chagrin for a guest thy heart be,
 With shackles of selfish concern if opprest thy heart be,
 Of the case of another one's heart it behoveth enquire,
 So solace for thee may ensue and at rest thy heart be.

54. Unto the sage's eye what matters foul or fair ?
 To heaven or hell what skills the lover if he fare ?
 Satin or serge, what reck the love-lorn of their wear ?
 Pillow or brick their heads beneath, what do they care ?

55. With wine and rose and pleasance a lifetime have we spent ;
 No need of ours from Fortune hath found accomplishment ;
 And yet, though wine hath brought us no one desire fulfilled,
 The traveller turns not backward upon the way he went.

56. Many a valley we've traversed and many a plain ;
 The world, east and west, we have travelled amain ;
 But of none have we heard who came back from this way ;
 'Tis a road that no traveller returneth again.

57. Rubies in flow, O wine, thou art ; the flask the mine is ;
 The bowl thy body is ; ay, and the soul its wine is :
 That cup, which all a-laugh with water of the vine is,
 A tear of crystal is, wherein heart's blood ashine is.

58. My soul in the sphere's script¹ from all eternity
 Tablet² and Pen³ and Hell and Heaven sought to see,
 Until the Teacher said : " Of very certainty,
 Tablet and Pen and Hell and Heaven are all in thee."⁴

¹ Lit. broidery ; i.e. the stars.

² The Angelic Record of men's fore-ordained fate.

³ The Divine Pen (the Will of God) which is supposed to write it.

⁴ Cf. the Kathopanishad : " The wise see within their own heart the one and only lord, the Self that is in all living things, the one thing that perisheth not in all things that perish " ; " It is the same universal spirit that is in the Soul and in the Sun " ; " He who thinks of a deity other than himself knoweth nothing." See also Quat. 413, post.

59. In her track we have traversed wastes many and vast,
 But nought by our travail we've gained, first and last :
 So froward was Fortune, if whiles in our life
 Aught of sweet she vouchsafed, in a moment 't was past.

60. For none behind the veil of myst'ries way is ;
 None in the secret of the world's array is :
 Save in earth's breast, for us no place of stay is ;
 Give ear, for no light matter this I say is.

61. Each bladelet of grass on the bank of the stream 't hath sprouted,
 From the lip of some angel-fair one, 't would seem, 't hath sprouted :
 Beware lest on aught of the greensward in scorn thou trample ;
 From the dust of some tulip-cheek, I deem, 't hath sprouted.

62. Set wine on my palm, for my heart in fever-heat is ;
 Like quicksilver this our life unstable of feet is :
 Awake, for the favour¹ of fortune a dream and a cheat is !
 Up, up, for the fire of youth as water fleet is !²

¹ *Bideri*, lit. "wakefulness," i.e. id. "favourableness," as applied to fortune ;
 the word is here used for the sake of a word-play with *Awake*, dream or sleep.
² i.e. the vigour and energy of youth are as fleeting as running water.

63. The seedling of certitude fruits not in this world aye,
 Because there is no one ensueth aright in this way :
 Lo, everyone clappeth weak hand on the tender spray ;
 To-morrow the first¹ account, to-day as yesterday.²

¹ i.e. the first day. ² Meaning apparently, "Count life as beginning
 to-morrow, absolved from all concern of past and present." "To-day is
 known, yesterday is past ; to-morrow is the coming day."—*Luck. Comm.*

64. 'T were best in this age that thou make thee few comrades
or none ;

With the folk from afar but conversing, 't were best live alone :

He, on whom thou most straitly reliest [thyself, be it known],

An thou ope reason's eye, thou wilt find him the worst of thy foen.¹

¹ "Quoth the Prophet, 'The most hostile of thine enemies is thine own self.'"—*Luck. Comm.* I have adopted this reading, although I am not at all certain that it is the right one.

65. O thou that com'st hot from the sphere of the Spright and
the Ghost,

That art dazed amid Four,¹ Five,² Six,³ Seven,⁴ the world and the
host,⁵

Drink wine, for no whit of the place whence thou comest thou
know'st ;

Live merry, for nothing thou ken'st of that whither thou go'st.

¹ The Four Elements. ² The Five Senses. ³ The Six Sides, i.e. North, South, East, West, Above and Below. ⁴ The Seven Planets or Firmaments ; brief, earth and heaven, natural phenomena generally. ⁵ i.e. of heaven, the stars.

66. Wine, for all 't is ill-reputed of the Law Divine, 't is good ;

When by hand of youth or loveling proffered us is wine, 't is good :

Bitter 't is and 't is forbidden ; but for me, in fine, 't is good ;

Whatsoever is forbidden, sure from old long syne, 't is good.

67. For regret of the world, marry, why all our tears and our sighs ?

A man who lived aye hast thou ever seen with thine eyes ?

This scantling of breath, in thy body that is, is a loan¹ ;

Who lives by a loan, it behoveth him live loan-wise.²

¹ Syn. something transient. ² i.e., he who lives by or in that which is transient, it behoveth him live as if each moment were to be his last.

68. On the day when the heavens are Sundered and cloven in twain,¹
 In the hour when the stars are shaken and fall like rain,²
 I will seize on thy skirt, as thou far'st through the judgment-plain,
 And say, "For what crime, O idol,³ hast thou me slain?"

¹ Koran, lxxxii, 1.

² Koran, lxxxi, 2.

³ i.e., fair one, the beloved.

69. Though for sin foul of fortune and favour am I,
 I despair not, as those who on idols rely:
 Nay, what morn of the yesternight's tippie I die,
 "Wine and wench!" and "Go hang hell and heav'n!" I shall cry.

70. If thine affairs go well, by thy design 't is not;
 If ill, of thy default, by the same sign, 't is not.
 Resign thee, then, to Fate; submit and live content;
 The world for good or ill to order thine 't is not.

71. Since thy dying a dying e'en once and for aye is,
 Die once and ha' done wi't, since vain to gainsay is.
 This bloody foul vestment of nerve and of sinew,
 If no more it be needed, what cause for dismay is?

72. Sheer folly, O sage, of the morrow debate is,
 And madness of Fortune to vapour and prate is:
 To-day the wise know and to-morrow its mate is;
 For lo! but one soul the whole world, small and great, is.¹

¹ Cf. the Upanishads, *Tat tvam asi*, "That art thou," the Vedantic dogma of the identity in all of the essence of life, the Undifferented Self.

73. Kheyyam, who whilere at the tents of philosophy wrought,
Fell into the furnace of Fate and was burnt in a thought;
The shears of implacable Doom cut his tent-rope of life
And the broker of Destiny cried him and sold him for nought.¹

¹ The word "tent" (*kheymek*) is here introduced for the sake of a word-play with the poet's name, *Kheyyam*, "tent-maker."

74. On the face of the earth an if for my usance a spear¹ is,
The price² of wine 't is, though that in ill savour, I hear, is:
"To-morrow,"³ quoth they, "the price of wine thine is no longer."
Helm and jack, 'gainst my lance, your armour but gossamer⁴
sheer is.⁵

¹ *Kheymek*, word used for sake of word-play on its other meaning, "tile," i.e. that used to cover winejars.

² *Wejh*, syn. face, used for sake of word-play with "face of the earth."

³ i.e. after death.

⁴ i.e. those who rail

at winebibbing.

⁵ Lit. "Meryem-spun"; i.e., the miraculously subtle threads which are fabled by the Muslims to have been spun by the Virgin Mary (Arabic, *Meryem*) for her own shroud and which, falling away on her ascension to heaven, gave rise to gossamer floating in the air. Cf. French, *Fil de la Vierge*.

⁶ An obscure quatrain, full of conceits. The meaning appears to be: "Wine is my best weapon against the ills of existence, and the contention of you zealots, who chide at me for drinking, that it will not avail me in the next world, is mere gossamer (i.e. futility) against the lance of my argument, i.e. is beside the purpose and unavailing, as I reckon only of the present, knowing and believing nothing of individual life after death."

75. If thou a week have drunken, from rise to set of sun,
Set not from hand the winecup till Friday,¹ too, is done.
In *our* religion Friday and Saturday are one:
Nay, God Almighty worship; *day*-worshipper be none.

¹ Friday, the Mohammedan Sabbath and day of public worship, on which drunkenness would, of course, be especially reprehensible.

76. The thorn, that's trodden down of every cow, maybe,
 Sprung from some loveling's tress, some fair one's brow may be :
 Each brick, on palace-wall that standeth now, maybe,
 A vizier's hand or head of Sultan prow may be.

77. If the heart, as it standeth, life's secret could know,
 In death, too, the myst'ries Divine it would know :
 Since to-day, soul and self, thou knowst nothing, to-morrow
 What deem'st thou the soul, from self parted, should know ?¹

¹ i.e., since soul and body, combined, can avail to fathom nothing of the mysteries of creation by their united efforts, what thinkest thou the soul alone, on the morrow of death, shall avail to know ?

78. If after lust and greed's bell-wether thou wilt go,
 Trust me, without a rap or feather thou wilt go :
 Consider what thou art and whence thou camest erst ;
 Bethink thee what thou dost and whither thou wilt go.

79. The good and the bad that in mortal estate is,
 The glad and the sad that in Fortune and Fate is,
 Charge not to the Sphere,¹ for, according to reason,
 The Sphere in a thousandfold worse than *thy* strait is.²

¹ i.e., heaven, as ordering all things. ² i.e., heaven is still more subject to the laws of necessity than thou. According to the Upanishads, "The gods are on *this* side of the evolution of the One Reality, the Self," and are subject to transiency and the laws of illusion, even as are mortals. Cf. the doctrine of the subjection of the Gods to the Fates and to Death, which formed an essential part of the Greek and Scandinavian religions and indeed of all religious systems but the Semitic.

80. This pitcher, like me, a lover distraught hath been,
 In the bond of a loveling's tress-tip caught hath been ;
 This handle thou see'st on its neck was e'en a hand
 Which erst on the neck of a loved one oft hath been.

81. Why, Kheyyam, for sin this mourning and misgiving ?
 Marry, where's the good, more or less, of grieving ?
 'T is because of sin that forgiveness cometh ;
 If there were no sin, there were no forgiving.¹

¹ A favourite theme of the Persian poets.

82. Beware of Chance, for cause of stress and teen 't is ;
 Sit not secure from Fortune's sword, for keen 't is ;
 Ay, and if Time set sweetmeat on thy palate,
 Swallow it not, for poison-mixt, I ween, 't is.

83. Like water in the river, like wind on wold, for aye
 Of thine and my existence gone is another day :
 Of two days and their canker I never yet did reck—
 The day that 's still unmorrowed, the day that 's past away.

84. These two or three days of existence flit by ;
 Like wind o'er the desert, unheeded, they fly :
 Of two days' vexation yet never recked I—
 The day that is past and the day that draws nigh.

85. Void of heart's delight heaven's bowl of blue is;
 In this world of ours blithe I know not who is :
 Since from death assured not a soul abideth,
 Here below what gain, then, for me and you is ?

86. Since hand I could from foot distinguish, first and last,
 Base Fortune against me hath kept its hand shut fast :
 Alack, that THEY withal will set in the account
 A life which hath for me sans wine and wanton past !

87. Knock not at every door that standeth in thy way
 For nought ; with Fortune's good and bad contented stay :
 From the Sphere's casting-cup and Providence's dice,
 Whatever number's thrown, *that* it behoveth play.

88. With friend and with foeman well-doing is well in the end :
 Whose habit and nature are good, how to ill shall he tend ?
 Thy friend, if thou use him unkindly, becometh thy foe,
 And if thou do good to thy foe, he becometh thy friend.

89. No whit I know, not I, if He who mixed my clay
 Made me for Hell or Heaven ; but, be *that* as it may,
 Give me but wine and wench and lute in hand to-day,
 By the stream-side, and pocket thyself Heav'n's promise-to-pay.

90. Bring hither, boy, that wine which all the world's delight is,
That wine which to the rose of joy as the moon's light is :
Quick, for the fire of youth as water still a-flight is,¹
And fortune's favour² but a vision of the night is.

¹ "The days of youth resemble running water."—*Luck. Comm.* ² Lit.
"wakefulness": see previous note. The Persians call a lucky man "one
whose fortune waketh," and an unlucky "one whose fortune sleepeth."

91. Drink wine, for solace sure 'gainst every care and cark 't is;
Sure salve for wounded hearts and souls with sorrow dark 't is :
Grief's deluge, if it rise, before it quickly sinketh ;
Take refuge, then, in wine, for lo! thy Noah's ark 't is.

92. My drinking of wine no wise for the sake of disport is,
Nor for lewdness and breach of religion and good report is ;
'T is but that I fain would win forth of myself for a moment :¹
The cause of my toping and fuddling myself this in short is.

¹ i.e., as before noted, *objectivationis causa*.

93. This world's no place of pleasance nor sojourn ; here below
The sage were ever better dead-drunk to be, I trow :
Upon the fire of sorrow cast wine for water aye,
Or e'er into earth's bosom, with wind in hand,¹ thou go.

¹ i.e. empty-handed. The bringing in of the names of the four elements
(wind, *Persict*, = air) is considered an elegance.

94. Since hither, willy nilly, I came the other day
 And hence must soon be going, without my yea or nay,
 Up, cupbearer ! thy middle come gird without delay ;
 The world and all its troubles with wine I'll wash away.

95. When they tell me that with the Houris¹ to feast is good,
 "The juice of the grape," I answer, "at least is good."
 Take this cash,² then, and wash thy hands of yon promise-to-pay,
 For the sound of the drum from afar to list is good.³

¹ The Houris (*Hawar*), the black-eyed girls of Paradise. ² i.e. this present enjoyment that is in hand. ³ *Omne ignotum pro magnifico* ; i.e., Paradise, which sounds so charming, as described by the pious, may, when actually gotten, turn out to be as little agreeable as the sound of the drum near at hand.

96. In the season of Spring, forsooth, if a fair one, houri-wise,
 Brim me a cup of wine, where the blossomed meadows rise,
 Though, well as I wot, the thing show ill in vulgar eyes,
 I were worse than a dog if I gave a thought to Paradise.

97. Drain the goblet, for life everlasting this wine is ;
 The elixir of youth, sure, the juice of the vine is :
 'T is the time of the rose and the jolly Spring showers¹ :
 Be blithe, while this life for a moment yet thine is.

¹ Lit. "tipsy rains."

98. Since brimming o'er with blood,¹ O heart, thy fate to be is,
 Since momentarily thy case on other gate to be is,
 What brought thee, O my soul, to dwell in this my body,
 Since parted thence thy lot, or soon or late, to be is ?

¹ "Full of blood," idiomatic expression equivalent to "bleeding sore," also "perishing."

99. False coin with us no more passeth ; its time is sped ;
 The broom of truth hath swept Life's unclean pleasance-stead :
 Out of the tavern came an elder late and said,
 " Drink wine, for thou must sleep for ages with the dead."

100. Thy body, Kheyyam, to a tent I compare ;
 Its Sultan the soul and his dwelling's elsewhere :
 When the Sultan goes forth, his true dwelling to seek,
 The tent-pitcher Death strikes the tent then and there.

101. With us if the firmament war not, a marvel it is !
 If stones on our head Heaven pour not, a marvel it is !
 The Cadi the trust-funds¹ who selleth and buyeth him wine,
 If the schools at him rage and roar not, a marvel it is !

¹ *Waqf*, endowments for pious uses, and especially for the maintenance of students in the mosque-schools of divinity, who would, of course, break out into revolt against a Cadi who should embezzle the funds of which he is, *ex officio*, trustee for their benefit. The poet compares himself, *vis-à-vis* of heaven, to such a Cadi.

102. To the high soul, proclaim it, thought-taking is in vain ;
 It knows that all which happens is of its own domain :
 Whatever us betideth, the King¹ did so ordain ;
 To blame for aught that happens is none of the worlds twain.

¹ App. God.

103. Since God it was that made and shaped this mortal frame,
 Why did He give it prey to misery and shame ?
 If what He made is good, why break His handiwork ?
 And if it turn out ill, who but Himself 's to blame ?

104. Since the showers of the Spring have washed the tulip's cheek
 Arise, to the winecup thyself in haste bespeak ;
 For the green, that thy feet for pleasaunce to-day besseek,
 May spring from thy dust or ever another week.

105. The torch of the rose in the midst of the blossomed meads
 is lit ;

With a brace of black-eyed girls by the stream come let us sit :¹ ✓
 Round with the cup ! for the drinkers of wine in the morningtide
 Of mosque and temple reck not, of synagogue are quit.

¹ Var. of lines 1 and 2 : " On the marge of the blossomed meads and the streamlet's bank to sit, With a brace of black-eyed girls in the time of the rose is fit." ✓

106. If Love's a curse, it is of God's foreordering,
 Why, then, should folk miscall a heaven-appointed thing ?
 Since all things, good and bad, from His commandment spring,
 Why for us helpless slaves a Day of Reckoning ?

107. Through our toping the tavern in flourishing stead is ;
 The blood of relapses galore on our head is :
 If I sinned not, indeed, what should Mercy be doing ?
 That " our sins are the set-off¹ of Mercy," well said is.

¹ Lit. "embellishment."

108. I'm neither fit for mosque nor apt for convent-cell ;
 Lewd as a whore, at once dervish and infidel ;
 Sans faith or fortune, hope of heaven or fear of hell,
 God only of what clay He kneaded me can tell.

109. Each tulip abloom in the meadows that seen is
 From the blood of some prince or some sultan its sheen is ;
 Each violet, that springs from the heart of the greensward,
 A mole from the cheek of some fair that hath been is.

110. No moment at peace for thy lovers are we ;
 The grief of thy mourners hath poisoned our glee :
 O when shall thy sun to our window return ?
 For more num'rous than motes are the longers for thee.

111. Since past without profit are yester- and fore-yesterday,
 Since gladness and sadness and trouble alike pass away,
 I rede thee, whatever betideth, live merry to-day,
 For this is the secret delivers from need and dismay.

112. Understood of the Sphere's course, I own, of me nought is :
 Conceived, save Fate's rancour alone, of me nought is :
 Nay, how straitly soever my case I consider,
 A lifetime is passed and yet known of me nought is.

113. Full many a day and night, ere thou and I, hath been ;
 Revolving in its course long, long, the sky hath been :
 See that thou set not foot o'er rudely on the dust,
 For it the apple of some fair one's eye hath been.

114. The Good Guide¹ speaks of the feast of the pure of spright ;²
 He speaks of Roum and Araby Left and Right :³
 If "Wine's unclean" be said of some witless wight,
 How should I hearken, since God's self calls it "delight" ?⁴

¹ Mohammed ? ² i.e. of the delights prepared for the faithful in Paradise.
³ Eastern and Western Arabia ; i.e., of all manner of things, "Shakespeare
 and the musical glasses," anything but prohibition of wine. ⁴ "And rivers
 of wine, *delight* to the drinkers."—*Koran*, xlv, 16.

115. Skinker, a cup, for the world's but darkness¹ at best ;
 There's no Water of Life but thy lip to be found, East or West :
 Of this world and the next it is thou, thou alone, I desire ;
 And so on the Prophet be blessing !² A fig for the rest !

¹ *Tsulemat*, the Regio Tenebrarum, in which, according to Oriental legend,
 springs the Water of Life. ² An interjectional formula, something like our
 "Thank God !" etc.

116. Wine, cupbearer! knowledge good works, to my thought, is;
 Though for sin it reputed of those who know nought is.
 What use in the world is a man without knowledge?
 Marry, knowledge of man above all to be sought is.

117. Skinker, the heaven but a foam from the sea of thy gifts
 and grace is;
 Many a Mecca of the soul in thy quarter's narrow space is.
 If in the Kaabeh of the Soul of the Highest Place I question,
 Lo, on the thither road to die for me a "Highest Place" is.¹

¹ An obscure quatrain. The meaning appears to be that the true lover prefers death and calamity in the service of the beloved to all that the two worlds can offer; brief, a glose upon the eternal "All other pleasures are not worth its pains."

118. Skinker, a glance! For heart's content in thy sight is,
 And ease of spirit the gleanings of thy delight is:
 Our innermost soul thy heart's unspoken knoweth;
 The Jemshid's cup¹ of lovers thy heart sun-bright is.

¹ i.e., The World-showing Cup, a vessel in which Past, Present and Future are fabled to have been reflected at the will of the possessor, the prehistoric King Jemshid or Jem, who is also reputed to have been the inventor of wine; hence the name "Jem's cup" applied by Persian poets (with the secondary sense of *in vino veritas*) to the winecup.

119. Yon lapis-lazuli dome¹ and golden bowl²
 Full oft about have rolled and yet shall roll;
 But we, of fate foreordered, reach the goal
 But once and pass, like many another soul.³

¹ The sky. ² The sun. ³ Cf. Catullus: "Soles occidere et redire possunt; Nobis, quum semel occidit brevis lux, Nox est perpetua una dormienda."

120. This the dust of the Sage of Bokhara's ¹ way hath been,
 The which a notable man in his day hath been :
 Wherever thou settest thy foot, be sure the earth
 The hand of some champion of worth and sway hath been.

¹ *Muhammed Ismaïl el Bukhari* (A.D. 810-870), the author of the great compendium of Traditions known by his name.

121. Than Kei-Kawous's ¹ realm one draught of wine is better ;
 Than Kei-Kobad ² his throne and Tous's ³ shrine is better :
 In the dawn-hour, God wot, each wail a lover venteth
 Than canting devotees' deceitful whine is better.

¹ A king of the Keyanian Dynasty (*Kei* in Old Persian means "king"), who is supposed to be identical with Cambyzes. ² Another Keyanian monarch.

³ A sacred town and burial-place of the old Persian kings in North Khorasan, on or near the ruins of which stands the modern Meshed, about fifty miles distant from Kheyyam's native town, Nishapour.

122. Full of faith to the winehouse I hied me and laced
 The Magians' girdle ¹ right fast round my waist.
 The taverner's lad cast my fret for ill-fame
 Out of doors and the tavern washed out in all haste.

¹ "Girdle," the emblem of the Guebers, as well as of the Christians and perhaps, indeed, of all non-Muslims ; probably a survival of the sacred thread of the Brahmins and a relic of the Aryan settlement. Here it is symbolical of the drinker of wine.

123. Josshouse,¹ as well as Kaabeh, a shrine of worship is ;
 To beat the gong a fashion, in fine, of worship is :
 Prayer-niche and church and temple and rosary and cross,
 Each one of these, 't is certain, a sign of worship is.²

¹ Var. "winehouse." ² i.e., all sects (including, if we accept the variant, topers) worship the Divine Essence, each in its several fashion.

124. Skinker, a cup, for life but a moment, I trow, is ;
 'Twixt gladness and grief a moment its ebb and its flow is ;
 I rede thee live blithe, from fate whatsoever betide thee,
 For ne'er to one's wish the course of the world here below is.

125. Skinker, the wine we drink from thy cheek with sweat
 ashine is ;
 May the Eye¹ smite thee not, whose face the goal of eyne is !
 The fount of grace Divine that ruby lip of thine is ;
 An hundred Khizr²-Christs³ the man who quaffs thy wine is.

¹ i.e. the evil eye. ² Khizr (*Khidr*), a fabulous Muslim saint, apparently confounded with Elias by one of those ignorant misconceptions so common in the work of the "Illiterate" Prophet ; he is fabled to have been a general of Alexander the Great and to have accompanied that conqueror on his invasion of India, which has been turned by Oriental romancers into an expedition to the Regio Tenebrarum in quest of the Water of Life. The king failed of his quest, but his follower succeeded in finding the miraculous spring and having drunken of it, became immortal and was made by Divine appointment guardian of the fount. ³ The allusion is to Christ's power of raising the dead, whence the Muslims call him "The Breath of God."

126. Skinker, my heart afire with love and longing vain is;
Come, for the skinker, sure, the leach for lover's pain is:
Life from thy coming feet to hope my spirit fain is;
Hope dieth not in me whilst life in heart and brain is.

127. Skinker, after heaven what is all this craving, pray?
What is there in heaven, wine and wanton saving, pray?
Wine and wench we have *here*; than wench and wine,
In *this* world and *that*, what is more worth having, pray?

128. Skinker, my heart, that gladness for dole knoweth not,
Of the goods and delights of this world, save the bowl, knoweth not:
Give wine, for the breath¹ of the morn is a life-giving breath,¹
The virtue whereof, saving Jesus, a soul knoweth not.²

¹ Syn. "moment." ² Jesus, as "The Breath of God," *par excellence*, may be supposed to have known the comparative worth of various kinds of breath. The moment of daybreak is the favourite drinking-time of the Oriental toper, who may be conceived to have chosen it for special observance, with a waggish eye to the Muslim doctrine of the especial efficacy of the fore-dawn prayer. See my "Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night," *passim*. It appears to have been the usage of wine-drinkers, after passing the night in debauchery, to salute the dawn with a particular cry or wailing song, called the "Wail of the Morning," which is constantly celebrated and referred to by Kheyyam, Hafiz and other poets of the Anacreontic school.

129. Skinker, a cup, I prithee; for He who mixed our clay
The line of love and toping writ on our heads¹ for aye:
The world with wine and wanton is ready to our hand;
But heaven's girls and nectar but promised are one day.

¹ Alluding to the well-known Oriental belief that every man's destiny is written, in mystic character, on the sutures of his skull.

130. From unbelief to faith's abiding-place¹ a breath is ;
 Twixt certitude's and doubt's domain the space a breath is :
 This one sole precious breath I rede thee, therefore, cherish ;
 For the whole sum of life, in any case, a breath is.²

¹ Syn. encamping-place, stage of a journey (*mensil*). ² "Breath"
 (throughout) syn. "moment."

131. That precious ruby dug from out another mine is ;
 That *union* unmatched marked with another sign is ;
 The cark of this and that thy vain conceit and mine is ;
 Love's story hath a tongue other than mine and thine is.¹

¹ Cf. Renan, "Vie de Jésus": "Son divin esprit ne parlait pas leur patois"; meaning, "Abstract truths, the mysteries of the ideal, are not made to be understood of the vulgar." It may perhaps be necessary to remind the reader that "union" is the exact word (*mot propre*) for a fine single pearl: cf. "Hamlet," v, 2, etc., etc.

132. To-day that my turn and my season of youth it is,
 Wine I'll drink, the delight of my heart for in truth it is :
 Blame it not, for, though bitter it is, it is pleasant ;
 It is bitter because that my life in good sooth it is.

133. O heart, since the time still chagrinful doth make thee,
 And the soul will ere long altogether forsake thee,
 Ere the green from thine ashes spring up, on the greensward
 A day or two sit and to pleasance betake thee.

134. Law, save the Truth, that's apt unto the sage, there is not ;
 Created thing beyond its arbitrage there is not :
 All things that are to be on this wise it behoveth ;
 Aught otherwise in any place or age there is not.

135. Take the cup in thy hand, as the tulip in May ;
 With a tulip-cheeked fair, if time serve thee, be gay :
 Drink wine and rejoice in the sweet of the day,
 For Old Time will ere long lay thee low in the clay.

136. Erst swiftly as the wind my feet did come and go,
 Or e'er my body sound waxed weak ; but now, heigho !
 For feebleness of case, all weariful and slow,
 Like to a sick man's breath, 's my faring to and fro.

137. O many's the mortal's blood that Fate of its spleen hath shed !
 O many's the rose newborn whose petals it clean hath shed !
 In beauty and youth, O boy, I rede thee, conceit thee not,
 For many's the bud unblown that Fate on the green hath shed !

138. Skinker, a cup ; for the lamp of the heart burns low,
 So life at wine's fire may kindle afresh and glow.
 A plague on thy ruby lip ! To its fiery wine
 Who setteth the lip upraiseth it thence ne'er mo'.

139. 'T is the season of mirth and the moon up aloft alight is;
 Give wine, for Heaven a quirk of the schoolman's spright is!
 Thou knowest that death, like lightning, 's a harvest-burner:
 What while thou lookest, our harvest consumed outright is.

140. Skinker, what shall I do? For consumed is this heart of
 mine for thy sake!
 More confounded am I, sooth to say, than one drunken with
 wine, for thy sake!
 Though the folk dub me sot, of a truth it is not with the juice
 of the vine
 That I'm drunken, but rather with grief, by all that's Divine,
 for thy sake!

141. Though money no stock for the sage's avail is,
 To moneyless folk the world's garden a jail is;
 Empty-handed, the violet drooping and pale is,
 Whilst, with gold in her purse,¹ the rose laughing and hale is.

¹ i.e. the gold-coloured stamens of the rose.

142. The compend of the world of abstract truth is Love;
 Chief verse and burden of the ode of youth is Love:
 O thou, that of Love's world no knowledge hast, give ear
 And lay this word to heart, that Life, in sooth, is Love.

143. An hundred thousand Moses Time's Sinai bath seen ;
 An hundred thousand Jesūs its azure sky¹ hath seen ;
 An hundred thousand Caesars its hall go by hath seen ;
 An hundred thousand Kisras² its vault on high hath seen.

¹ Lit. "convent"; but *dir-i-mina*, "the blue convent," = "sky."

² Chosroës.

144. In the tavern of Love high in honour my name is ;
 Wine to drink and to worship my lot and my aim is ;
 I'm the soul¹ of the world in this Magians' Temple :
 The picture, in brief, of my being this same is.

¹ *Jan*, syn. "life."

145. Wine and wanton, no more, what I crave from Time's flight is ;
 Regardless of past and of future my spright is :
 The heart knoweth nothing of drunk or of sober ;
 My quest of both worlds but a moment's delight is.

146. For a high-bosomed maid to the clay if THEY bring thee,
 For a loving to dole and decay if THEY bring thee,
 Be wise and the battle avoid, as thou mayest,
 Nor the petticoats seek, but dismay if they bring thee.

147. The gurgle of wine in the flute of the flagon's throat, how
 sweet !
 The sound of the song and the pipe's complaining note, how sweet !
 Sheer wine to tipple and toy with a heart-alluring fair,
 Far from the cark of the time, how goodly, God wote, how sweet !

148. Skinker, our hearts, wherein we've sown the love of thee,
 Fain hidden would it keep to all eternity :
 Shake not thy skirts for pride 'gainst those who bend the knee,
 For never from thy skirt our hand shall loosened be.

149. Cupbearer, from thy threshold our way we will not take ;
 Though thou withdraw, for answer thy nay we will not take :
 Ay, though thou raise us never from out the dust, our heads
 From off thy pathway, happen what may, we will not take.

150. If the ruby-lipped fair in this bosom of mine is,
 Khizr's water outvied by the juice of the vine is :
 But, though Venus¹ be minstrel and Jesus be mate,
 If the heart's not in presence, no gladness in wine is.²

¹ Venus (*Zuhrah*) is fabled by the Muslims to be the minstrel of Heaven.
² i.e., when the beloved is with me, wine is for me the water of life ; but,
 without her, there is no pleasure in drinking.

151. Skinker, that wine whose skinker that ruby lip of thine is,
 My heart shall ne'er abandon, what while a breath yet mine is.
 I'm mad with love and longing : presumptuous an thou deem me,
 Of my extreme of longing presumptuousness the sign is.

152. Skinker, thy moon-cheek the life and the soul of the world is,
 The lord of my heart and the talk and the goal of the world is.
 The sun in the water, O sun-face, is not so goodly ;
 Which not my good only, but that of the whole of the world is.

153. Anent the love of thee to blame the ear I lend not;
 With dullards on this point 't is wiser to contend not.
 The wine of loverhood for men of worth alone is;
 The pleasures of this cup the unworthy apprehend not.

154. "Sure, true to the olden guise thy faith will be;
 Ay, firm in its first assize thy faith will be,"
 I say, and yet, as the world's foundations infirm,
 I know, O light of mine eyes, thy faith will be.

155. "Thy tress-tip hath devoured full many a head,¹ my sweet,"
 Said I; and "Hold thy peace," quoth she, "and be discreet."
 Quoth I: "The fruit I'll eat, some day, of that thy shape,"²
 And she: "Did ever man fruit from a cypress³ eat?"

¹ It is a favourite Oriental conceit to figure lovers' heads and hearts as hanging to the tress-tip of the beloved. ² i.e., I will enjoy it. ³ The cypress is the stock simile of the Persian poet for a straight and slender shape.

156. "Hell is the drunkard's portion," to us they say;
 A saw 't is, withal the heart cannot away.
 If lovers and toppers must go to hell, my fay,
 Thou'lt see Heaven bare as my hand on the Judgment Day!

157. Still "lewd" folk dub me, without my fault, perdie;
 'T is they that put their own foul fancies on me:
 In what, indeed, have I broken God's decree,
 Good folk, save toping and wenching and sodomy?

158. The Intellects Ten¹ and the Planets Seven on the Welkins
Nine

And the Heavens Eight and the Sides Six have written this line,
That God from the Senses Five and Elements Four and Souls
Three²

In the Worlds Two no one body hath ever kneaded like thine.³

¹ i.e., the ten intellectual faculties—opinative, intuitive, estimative, contemplative, rational, imaginative, retentive, conceptive, apprehensive and discriminative; or perhaps, here, the ten celestial intelligences which correspond to and “inform” them.

² i.e., the vegetable, the animal and the human.

³ i.e., all creation declares the unique quality of the beloved.

159. The scope of both worlds in the cup the toppers troll is;
Eternity's sun the moon-faced cupbearer's bowl is:
The word of the secret that hid in Creation's soul is,
An thou read it aright, behold, in the wine-flask the whole is.

160. Cupbearer, loud and high the voice of our dole is become;
My drunkenness out of all bounds and passing control is become;
Though whitehaired, I'm merry with wine, for, thanks to the
sight of thy down,
Yet fresh, in my winter of life, the Spring of my soul is become.

161. Skinker, since guide to Life Eternal none is,
Than wine in eld nought better 'neath the sun is;
Our housemate 't is, for no such heat from Khizr's¹
Or Kauthir's fount² as from the flagon won is.

¹ Khizr's fount; i.e. the water of life.
of nectar in Paradise.

² *Kauthir*, a river (or cistern)

162. Skinker, a glance! for my heart for dole is empty;
 The lions¹ are gone and the brake of the soul is empty:
 Nightly with bubbles, O cup of the Sphere, thou foamest;
 But to-day, when my turn it is, the bowl is empty.²

¹ "Lion-like men" (*Luck. Comm.*); i.e., apparently, "all my friends of worth."
² i.e., apparently, "Thou (Fortune) lavishest favours on others, but withholdest them from me."

163. Skinker, whose cheek than Jem's cup of display¹ is better,
 Than Life Eternal to die in thy way is better;
 Each grain of the dust of thy feet, that my face illumeth,
 Than an hundred thousand suns of the day is better.

¹ See note to Quatrain 118.

164. Thou whose lip the elixir of ruby delight¹ is,
 Whose chagrin the true food of the heart and the spright is,
 Who's unslain of the deluge of grief for thy sake,
 Midmost Life's Noah's Ark, in the grave such a wight is.

¹ Alluding to a certain electuary, compounded with (*inter alia*) rubies and said to have an exhilarating effect.

165. Skinker, come; of that liquor, which heart and faith mine is,
 Fill a cup, for my life sure the juice of the vine is:
 If *your*¹ wont to refrain from this tipple divine is,
 My usance to frolic with wanton and wine is.

¹ Addressed to the pietists.

166. There's nothing but myst'ry its every part is ;
 'Twixt dearth and abundance no mean for the heart is :
 Before each caravan (save in Love's way it be,
 For *that* hath no leader) a guide from the start is.

167. Quoth the rose : " Than my sight more delectable what is ?
 Yet to die in the rose-water cistern my lot is."
 With the tongue of the case quoth the bulbul, " Each day
 Count a year, when Fate laugheth and sorrow forgot is."

168. Skinker, this heart of mine more weary than the dead is,
 For he with heart at ease within the cold earth's bed is :
 What though my skirt I wash with tears of blood, for sin
 My skirt than these my eyes yet fouler and more red is.¹

¹ "A foul skirt" is an idiomatic expression for "a sin-polluted conscience or reputation," as "a clean skirt" is the contrary.

169. Of grief for thy sake I'm adread ; and who, my fair, is not ?
 Nay, who, that the due of thy cheek's my patience, aware is not ?¹
 My wish and my object art thou ; and other than thou in my heart
 By heaven I swear, and again, by heaven, I swear I is not.

¹ "Who knows not that thy cheek is entitled to claim as a right my patient endurance of suffering for its sake ?"

170. If, skinker, my heart from thy hand and care would go,
 Meknoweth not forth of itself it where would go :
 The Soufi, that, like a strait vessel, is full of himself,
 But give him one draught, to head then and there would go.¹

¹ A very obscure quatrain, meaning, apparently, that the beloved is become the lover's self and that to take his heart away from her keeping would be, therefore, to take it out of itself, i.e. to send it distracted ; and that the power of her charms is such that even the hypocritical, self-absorbed Soufi, if she gave him a single draught of the wine of her love, would come to a head, i.e. it would be all over with him.

171. Skinker, bestir ! The world's grown gay with rose and green :
 Yet but a week and earth and clay are rose and green :
 Drink wine and cull the rose, for an thou think thereon,
 Refuse and dust but yesterday were rose and green.

172. Skinker, my trusty old friend and companion old wine is ;
 Life, without liquor, believe me, no usance of mine is :
 Egad, if thou'dst have me be blithe, give the wine my heart
 craveth ;
 God knoweth, the life of my soul the fair maid of the vine is.

173. Skinker, my heart and soul are perishing for thee ;
 Where'er thou go'st, my hand thy skirt shall never free :
 Thou'rt gone and thousand hearts do pine for thee. Come back !
 An hundred thousand souls thy sacrifice shall be.

174. In this world without faith, that our sojourning-place is,
 Many things have I searched ; but the end of the case is,
 This only I know, that the cypress less straight
 Than thy shape and less lucent the moon than thy face is.

175. That wine,¹ which of itself is apt all forms to don,
 That's vegetable now and animal anon,
 Deem not it leaves to be with what it putteth on :
 Itself abideth still, though attributes be none.

¹ i.e., app. the essence of life, the *Ding an sich* of Kant and the *Wille* of Schopenhauer, the Platonic Idea, the abiding type of the perishable individuality ; possibly, however, the Vedantic "Self" is meant.

176. My life's practice¹ the praise of the juice of the vine is ;
 Nought round me save gear and utensils of wine is :
 If *thy* master, O zealot, be Reason, herein
 Be content, for thy master a scholar of mine is.

¹ i.e. religious exercises.

177. In temple and mosque-school, in convent and cell,
 Are seekers of Heaven and fearers of Hell ;
 But none that conceiveth God's myst'ries aright
 E'er suffered *that* seed¹ in his bosom to swell.

¹ i.e. the seed of the hope of Heaven and fear of Hell.

178. To-day since it Friday, the day hight of grace, is,
 Drink wine from the bowl, for the cup out of place is :
 Nay, on weekdays one bowl an thou quaffest, to-day
 Drink two, for that Friday the prince of the days is.¹

¹ "The better the day, the better the deed."

179. When the elements' course a moment by chance to thy
 gree is,
 Do justice, albeit each breath an oppression to thee is :
 And sit with the wise, for a scantling of earth and of air,
 Of fire and of water, the basis of thee and of me is.

180. If minstrel and maid at hand of the Houris' breed there be,
 If wine by a running rill and the marge of a mead there be,
 Ensue not a better than this nor kindle extinguished Hell :
 Sure, there's no Heaven save this, if Heaven, indeed, there be.

181. Thou'st seen the world, and all thou hast seen, 't is nought ;
 And all of thee said and heard hath been, 't is nought ;
 Thou'st run all whither the poles between ; 't is nought ;
 And all that at home thou'st garnered, e'en, 't is nought.

182. Alack, for this flesh and bodily guise is nought !
 This circuit¹ and tented roof of the skies is nought !
 Live merry, for lo ! in this coil of death and life
 We hang by a breath and that, likewise, is nought.

¹ I.e. the globe.

183. Dust in the world of dust on dust I strew and go ;
To an hundred foes and friends I bid adieu and go :
With thy how and wherefore, friend, for me there's no concern,
So long as in peace, indeed, my strewing I do and go.

184. Drink wine, for God wot thou shalt slumber under the clay,
Sans playmate or friend or comrade, many a day.
Beware lest this hidden secret to any thou say,
"No tulip withered again shall blossom aye."

185. I'm a drinker of wine and I drink in the railers' despite
Who cry "Drink it not ; 't is the foe of the faith !" day and night.
Since I know, then, for certain that wine is the foe of the faith,
By Allah, I'll drink the foe's blood, as is lawful and right !

186. Existence, with wine and skinker unblest, is naught ;
Sans the wail of the flute of Irac, no less, 't is naught :
The more the world's case I consider, the more I see,
The essence of all is enjoyment ; the rest is naught.

187. Come again are the clouds and are weeping on meadow
and tree :

Without cramoizin wine¹ it behoveth no moment to be.

To-day that this greensward's our pleasaunce, I wonder, ah me !

To-morrow what eyes that² which springs from our ashes will see ?

¹ Lit. "wine of *arghwan*," i.e., wine of the brilliant red of the *Arghwan*, the Redbud or Judas-tree (*Cercis Siliquastrum*), which in the Spring covers itself, stem and all, with a multitude of bright red blossoms, before putting forth a single leaf. The comparison to wine is a favourite one with Hafiz and other Persian poets ; but all former translators render *arghwan* by "Persian Lilac," which is a *Syringa* and has purple flowers. ² "that," i.e. that green.

188. Bethink thee that soulless and bare thou shalt go;
 The veil of God's mysteries to tear thou shalt go :
 Drink wine, for thou knowest not whence thou hast come;
 Live blithe, for thou knowest not where thou shalt go.

189. On the rose's cheek the dew of the newborn year is fair;
 On the green of the sward a face full of heartis cheer is fair:
 'Of yesterday that is past though thou say, "It was foul," live blithe;
 Of yesterday speak thou not; to-day, that is here, is fair.

190. God, when He mixed and moulded our being's clay,
 Had e'en foreknowledge of all we should do and say;
 Without His order no sin of mine was aye;
 Then why should He doom me to burn on the Judgment Day?

191. Whatever betides on the Tablet of Destiny writ is;
 Of good and of evil thenceforward the Pen Divine quit is:
 In Fate foreordained whatsoever behoveth It 'stablished:
 Our stress and our strife and our thought-taking vain every whit is.

192. Thy very life's the dread of death and nothingness;¹
 Yet thence shall spring the tree of everlastingness:
 A Jesus-breathed one brought my soul to life: Death came
 And of my being washed his hands, grown powerless.²

¹ i.e., the fear of death (Schopenhauer's *Wille zum Leben*) is an essential part of human nature; it is that which perpetuates life.

² i.e., since Love, gifted with Jesus's power of reviving the dead, hath revived my soul, Death hath lost all power over me. "Car l'amour est plus fort Que les dieux et la mort."

193. With wine make merry, for Mahmoud's¹ empire this is ;
 And list to the harp, for David his lyre this is :²
 With past and future concern thyself no longer ;
 Be blithe to-day, for the aim of desire this is.

¹ i.e., Mahmoud (*Mekhmoud*) of Gherneh (A. D. 997-1028), the conqueror of India, infamous for his persecution of Firdausi. ² David is for the Mohammedans the type of the musician, as Joseph is that of manly beauty. Says Tabari: "God sent David the Psalms and gave him a goodly voice, so that he sang them to such fine airs and on such fair wise that none ever heard the like ; and when he went about to chant the praises of the Most High, the birds of heaven came and settling about his head, hearkened to him. Moreover, the mountains joined their voices to his, even as is said in the Koran, 'We enforced the mountains to celebrate Our praises with him night and morning.'" (*Koran*, xxxviii, 17.)

194. To all my secret, good and ill, I cannot tell ;
 My long thought shortly, will or nill, I cannot tell :
 A case mine is that I am powerless to expound ;
 A mystery I have that still I cannot tell.

195. A semblant the Sphere of this life on the wane of ours is ;
 And Oxus¹ a trace² of these eyes still a-rain of ours is :
 Hell a spark of the fire of this fretting in vain of ours is
 And Heaven but a breath of some time without pain of ours is.

¹ The well-known river.

² Syn. "effect" ; i.e., it owes its existence to our tears.

196. In a dream of the night quoth a sage me unto :
 "Rose of gladness for mortal from sleep never blew ;
 A thing, then, to death that akin is why do ?
 Up, for under the earth thou shalt slumber thy due !"

197. Since never the Sphere yet turned as a wise man would,
 What boots it seven heavens to reckon, and eight, what good ?¹
 Since all thy desires and endeavours are death-ensued,
 As well be the ant in the sand as the wolf in the wood !

¹ i.e., what good is it to weary oneself with theological or polemical questions ?

198. Seek not gladness, for life in fine but a waft of the wind is ;
 A Jem or a Kei each mote in our way that we find is ;¹
 A dream of the night, an illusion that lasts but a moment,
 The case of the world and the sum of this life of mankind is.¹

¹ The Vedantic doctrine of the MAYA.

199. This time-eaten inn, that by name the world hight is,
 That the twy-coloured hostel of Day and of Night is,
 The remains of a feast for an hundred Jems dight is,
 A tomb that hath lodged many Behrams of might is.

200. Since in the garden the bulbul hath broached her strain,
 Wine, like the tulip, in hand to take I'm fain,
 Rather than folk should say out of witlessness,
 Of me, "Such an one the goblet in hand hath ta'en."¹

¹ i.e., whether I drink or not, the folk are sure to say that I do so ; ergo, I will spare them the sin of telling a lie.

201. Now the rose of fair fortune for thee in full flower is,
 Why hold from the winecup, whilst mirth in thy power is ?
 Drink ; for Fortune a foeman perfidious and dour is,
 And uneath to reconquer the like of this hour is.

202. The moonshine hath sundered the skirt of the night ;
 Drink, for ne'er on a goodlier moment thou'lt light :
 Live blithe and bethink thee that many a moon
 On the earth, when thou'rt ashes and dust, will shine bright.

203. Before thee many a man and woman there hath been,
 By whom the whole wide world made bright and fair hath been :
 Soon shall *thy* body, too, turn dust, for that, indeed,
 Embodied thousandfold thy dust whilere hath been.

204. From the wind of the East when my heart thy scent did take,
 Me't left and thy track incontinent did take.
 Now not a thought betides it of me, for it,
 When ta'en of thy scent, thy temperament did take.¹

¹ i.e., it became infected with thy (the beloved's) forgetfulness and inconstancy.

205. In the palace, where Behram of old the cup did drain,
 The foxes cub and the lion to couch is fain ;
 That Behram, who wont for ever the *Gour*¹ to take,
 Thou seest the *Gour*,² in turn, himself hath ta'en.³

¹ Wild ass. ² Tomb. ³ Behram V, a great king of the Sasanian Dynasty, was called Behram of the *Gour* or Wild Ass on account of his fondness for the chase of that animal. He lived in the fourth century and was drowned in a morass whilst pursuing a *Gour*.

206. 'Gainst Fate, save submission, here below availeth nought ;
 With the people, except pretence and show, availeth nought :
 God wot, I have practised every shift that the wit can deem,
 But all, alack ! with Fate for a foe, availeth nought !

207. The face of the land hath washed its cheek with the New
Year's rain ;

'T is the time when the broken heart in thee grows whole again.
See, here is a down-checked maid and a green grass plot and wine:
Come, fool, for the grass will spring from thy dust in a day or twain.

208. How long shall I make bricks upon the surging sea ?¹

I'm weary of the folk and their idolatry :²

The silver-breasted Magian maids³ for me to-night !

Give me but wine and wench : what's Heaven or Hell to me !

¹ i.e., build upon no foundation, weary myself about matters over which I have no control. ² Lit. "of the idol-worshippers of the temple"; but the meaning is "of the Muslim priests and zealots." ³ i.e. the girls of the tavern.

209. Who aught of the scripture of reason at heart hath writ
Will suffer no day of his life unfilled to flit,
Whether he study to win him acceptance with God
Or choose his own ease and winecup in hand do sit.

210. O out upon the heart wherein Love's fire is not !
That for some kindle-hearts¹ stricken with desire is not !
The day withouten love and wine thou'rt fain to spend,
A day than it for thee more waste and dire is not.

¹ i.e., fair one, charmer.

211. A slave in revolt am I : Thy clemency, where is it ?
Dark-hearted I am : the light of Thy purity, where is it ?
If in return for obedience Thou proffer us Paradise,
This is but barter : Thy grace and Thy bounty free, where is it ?

212. How long of the lamp of the mosque and the temple-
incense wilt tell ?

How long of the sweets of Heaven and the grievousness of Hell ?
See where the Master of Fate, from all Eternity, wrote
That which to be is and not on the Tablet unchangeable.

213. Each heart, that unapt to relinquish the world and its ways is,
The impotent housemate of shame and regret all its days is :
Save a mind that is quit of dependence and blithesomeness
holdeth,
All else but the means and the cause of chagrin and amaze is.

214. In the age's assembly¹ winebibbing clean banned is ;
Nor hautboy nor glittern nor wanton in hand is :
Save the Mohtesib's² self, who is always in liquor,
No toper but 's given up wine in the land is.

¹ i.e. among the people of the day. ² The Mohtesib (*mukhtasib*) is an officer who, as his name denotes, was originally a mere inspector of weights and measures, but seems in course of time to have become a sort of Censor Morum, charged with the care of suppressing and punishing offences against morals, such as gambling, drinking and "chambering and wantonness" generally. It is a common joke with freethinking poets, such as Kheyyam and Hafiz, to accuse the Mohtesib of drunkenness, which is much as if we should represent Sir Wilfrid Lawson as taking the chair at a carousal of the Society for the Study of Inebriety. The quatrain seems to have been written during one of the periodical prohibitions of wine drinking forced by the orthodox party upon various princes.

215. In me just a breath, by the skinker's endeavour, remaineth ;
 'Midst the folk nought but discord and friends that dis sever
 remaineth :

Ne'er a pottle is left for our drinking of yesternight's liquor,
 And of life, in right earnest, I know not whatever remaineth.

216. Like the dog of the house, [O reviler,] in sooth is thy
 spright ;

Empty clamour and turmoil is all that it yields day and night :
 Fox-fashion it showeth, to boot, and it giveth hare-sleep ;¹
 The wolf's falseness and slyness it hath and the panther's despite.²

¹ i.e. false security.

² A piece of uncompromising invective, evidently aimed at his pietist enemies.

217. Heart-ableed for thy sev'rance no wight is that is not ;
 Distrught for thee none of insight is that is not :
 Albeit thou reck'st not of any one's longing,
 Full of longing for thee not a spright is that is not.

218. Of this folk's¹ fire, except a smoke, to see there's nought ;²
 Of hope from any wight of weal for me there's nought :
 On whoso skirt a hand I clap that on my head
 For Fate's despite I hold,³ humanity there's nought.

¹ Syn. tribe, sect, *quakers* the poet's direst foes, the pietists ? ² i.e., it neither lights nor warms ; they are all empty professors, from whom no good is to be expected. ³ To hold the hand on the head is a token of mourning, distress or complaint of oppression.

219. The alien my kin, if faith to me he show, is,
 And if my kinsman sin against me, he my foe is :
 Poisons, that work me weal, are theriacs¹ for me ;
 The drug, that doth me hurt, my poison evenso is.

¹ *Tiryac*, i.e. "thēriac," the mediæval "triale" (whence our "treacle"), from the Greek *thēriakos*, Lat. *theriaka*, a homœopathic antidote against serpent-poison, hence a general healing medicine (cf. Chaucer's "Christ that is unto all illis triacle"), and the Venice Treacle or Orvietan (*Theriaka Andromachi*) of the Middle Ages, a sort of electuary, which was held to be an universal remedy and of which an interesting account is given in "Kenilworth."

220. How comes it He, who framed the cup for His delight,
 To break His handiwork should after hold it right ?
 These heads, hands, feet and legs, so feat and fair of sight,
 By what love were they framed and broke by what despite ?

221. Ramazan-tide is come and the season of wine is gone ;
 The time of sweet scents and the juice of the vine is gone :
 All the liquor we've garnered and gotten undrunk must abide,
 And each strumpet we've found us unlain-with to pine is gone.

222. An elder forth of the tavern and drunken with wine did fare,
 The prayer-rug over his shoulder and winecup in hand he bare.
 "Ho, Gaffer," quoth I, "what ails thee ? How com'st thou in
 such a plight ?"

"Drink wine," was the answer he made me ; "the things of the
 world are air."

223. When the bulbul, drunken with Spring, to the garden his
way found

And the face of the rose and the winecup laughing and gay found,
Quoth he in my ear, with the voice of the case: "The present
Enjoy thou, for Life, once departed, no more is for aye found."

224. With rose-coloured wine the cup of delight to fill 't is good ;
To drink to the wail of the harp and the ghittern's trill 't is good ;
So the bigot, who knows not the charms of the brimming
chalice of wine,

A thousand parasangs from our quarter be still, 't is good.

225. Since departure is certain, to be what avails it ?
Idle fancies to follow, perdie, what avails it ?
Since no season is set for our quitting this dwelling,
From the journey's concern to sit free what avails it ?¹

¹ i.e., "since we must die and know not when we may be called upon to
leave all and depart, what use is it to ensue worldly good or to let the
inevitable departure out of our sight ?"

226. Buckler or mail, 'gainst the shaft doom-launched at the
breast, is nought ;

Honour, rank, riches,—all 'gainst Fate's behest is nought :
Oft as the things of the world I consider, so oft I see,
Goodness of all alone is good and the rest is nought.

227. Lord, Thou'rt the Bountiful and bounty to be kind is;
 How is't the sinner forth of Eden, then, consigned is?
 No bounty 't is to sell me pardon for obedience:
 Pardon me, sins and all; *that* bounty to my mind is.

228. In the vale of reproach when to fare it beseemeth,
 From the folks' blame the eye to forbear it beseemeth;
 Since, the ways of the world when I look at, the skirt
 To draw in and the age to forswear it beseemeth.

229. The tress on thy visage, indeed, to dwell desireth;
 But that turbulent Turk uprising¹ as well desireth:
 Thine eye in thine eyebrows' prayer-niche is grown a sitter;
 Th' Imámship² that drunken infidel³ desireth.⁴

¹ i.e., revolt, rebellion. ² The leadership of the people at prayer;
 syn. "precedence." ³ i.e. the eye. "Drunken," i.e. languorous,
 swimming, is a common Oriental epithet of the eye, which is also called
 "infidel" because it is the enemy of the true-believing lover and is trouble-
 exciting. ⁴ A quatrain of pure *galanterie*, full of untranslatable word-play.

230. Worship and store¹ my ill-repute forpasseth;
 Though thirty years life's tale (and yet more) passeth:
 Brief, there's nought good save cup on cup, an hundred,
 To drink, for that bridefeast and bride o'erpasseth.

¹ '*Ersh o kursí*, lit. "canopy and stool." I suspect (though I can find no authority for this) the meaning to be "bed and board," "the married state"; in which case the line would harmonize better with the rest of the quatrain and would read thus: "My ill-fame (habit of debauchery) hath dispensed with (or hindered me from) marriage, though I am over thirty." In Mohammedan countries it is considered disgraceful for a man of full age to remain unmarried.

231. By the cark of the world, in so far as thou mayest, set no store;
The canker of Past and Future lodge not in thy heart's core:
In this fortnight's house of Life, sweet wine still quaff and pour;
Live to thyself, not the world, though thou have wealth galore.

232. Wot'st thou what good my soul of the world gaineth?
Nought.

What of Life's sum, in fine, my hand retaineth? Nought.

Mirth's torch am I, which quenched, there's nought remaineth,
nought;

Jem's cup, which shattered once, there's nought assaineth,
nought.

233. Thy bridle from learning, the winecup to drain, twist;
Let Heav'n and Hell go and tow'rds Kauthir¹ thy rein twist²:
The turban-cloth's muslin³ for wine sell and fear not,
But instead round thy forehead a camel's-hair skein⁴ twist.

¹ See note to Quatrain 161, ante. Here met. = wineflask, as the source of nectar.

² "To twist the rein from or towards," i.e., "to turn one's horse's head from or towards" ought, means "to shun or seek it." The poet advises his friend to forswear learning (i.e., the study of theology, the "learning" *par excellence* of the Orientals) and the concern of Heaven and Hell, and give himself up to winebibbing and making merry.

³ i.e., the outside wrapping-cloth, as distinguished from the skull-cap, about which when wound, it forms the turban. This headdress is much respected in Mohammedan countries, being considered the especial sign of the Muslim man, and is not worn by women; so that to put off one's turban is practically equivalent to a renunciation of Muslimship.

⁴ *Dîrîf*, lit. a halter of camel's hair (see Dory's Dictionnaire des Vêtements et Supp. aux Dict. Arabes and Fraser's Travels); i.e. the "wisp of camel's hair" used by the Bedouins as a fillet to keep in its place round the temples the kerchief or hood of the burnous, which latter they draw over the head by way of headgear. The Bedouin being a man "sans foi ni loi," "pizen wherever met with," the adoption of his peculiar style of headdress, in lieu of the civilized turban, would be equivalent to a rejection of the usages and restraints of civilization, religious and social.

234. Ho, minstrel and wine, that I may cry the Cry of the morning! ¹

Fair fall the wight who is mindful the cup to ply of the morning!
Three things there be in the world that to us, indeed, are needful:
Wine and a wench, to fill, and the wailing sigh of the morning.

¹ For the Wail of the Morning see ante, Quatrain 128, note 2.

235. Thou, whose cheek takes of the eglantine the move,
Whose sweet face gains of the maids of Chín the move,
Alack, for thy glance on my tottering king at once
Bishop and pawn and castle and queen doth move! ¹

¹ A chess quatrain. "The maids of Chín" are the Chinese girls, the *ne plus ultra* of beauty for the Persians. The "tottering (lit. the "inclining," *maï*, i.e. in danger of checkmate) king" is the poet's heart.

236. At Balkh or at Baghdad what matters? Die we must.
The cup full, what skills sweet or bitter, pain or lust?
Drink wine, for many a moon will pass from full to new
And new to full again, when thou and I are dust.

237. Since life still passeth by, what matters sweet or sour?
When the soul's at the lip, what's Balkh? what's Nishapour?
Drink wine, for, after me and thee, full many a moon
Upon the world, from new to full, its light will pour.¹

¹ A variant of Quatrain 236.

238. None but the toper the worth of rose and of wine knoweth ;
 No straitheart or puckfist this mystery all-divine knoweth :
 In the ignorant man excusable ignorance is ;
 In wine a delight is the drunkard only, in fine, knoweth.

239. The bringing me hither¹ profited nought to the Sphere,
 Nor its glory 's increased by the hearing me off from here.²
 Nay, for what is my bringing hither and carrying hence
 From any that liveth my ears could never hear.

¹ My birth. ² My death.

240. The scent of the rose a thorn-prick, ywis, is worth ;
 And wine if thou drink, a headache such bliss is worth :
 A rainfall in Spring, that quickens a thousand hearts,
 Nay, give it its due ; the awaiting it this is worth.

241. He who the bases of earth and sky hath set
 Full many a brand on hearts that sigh hath set ;
 O many 's the lip like ruby and tress like musk
 That He in the round earth's coffer to lie hath set !

242. The sun on the light the lasso of morn hath cast ;
 The monarch of day the wine in the horn hath cast : ¹
 Up, drink, for the crier of dawn, arising from sleep,
 His call on the air for the day newborn hath cast.

¹ i.e., the sun hath filled the cup of the day with the wine of light.

243. Out on a hand like mine, when the goblét it taketh,
 If aught less good than wine, when that's to get, it taketh !
Thou art a bigot dry and *I* a lover moist :
 Ne'er did I hear of fire, that on the wet it taketh.¹

¹ i.e., the wine-soaked lover is proof against the fire of Hell. "This quatrain is addressed to an admonisher."—*Luck. Comm.*

244. Drink wine, or e'er thy name from the world of men depart ;
 For, when the heart it reacheth, cares there and then depart ;
 Marry, and loosen the tress of a fair one, knot by knot,
 Or ever the knots that couple thy members rend apart.

245. By mine obedience nought is added unto Thee,
 Nor disobedience past abates Thy majesty :
 Pay, then, nor take again, so known, indeed, it be
 That quick *Thou* art to pay and slow to take *Thy* fee.¹

¹ "Pay" or "take" here may mean also "pardon" and "punish."
 The ambiguous words are purposely used.

246. Since thy provision, fixed by God's august decree,
 No whit abated from or added to may be,
 At ease concerning all to rest behoveth thee
 And from whatever is behoveth to live free.

247. My life the sacrifice of any man of worth is ;¹
 If at his feet my head I lay, it of my dearth is :²
 If what Hell is, indeed, thou fain wouldst know for certain ;
 The commerce of the base, I tell thee, Hell on earth is.

¹ i.e., I am ready to lay down my life for him. ² i.e., it is because
 I have nothing better to offer him.

248. The heart is a lamp that taketh light from the cheek of the
 fair,
 And if of its grief it perish, new life it findeth there.
 One should still even the heart of the lover with taper and moth,
 For that for the folk consumed with love is a fit compare.

249. Wine, though forbid, five things condition—he who drinks,
 When, where, how much and what his company who drinks :
 When these conditions five concord, drink wine at will,
 For, these observed, except the sage it be, who drinks ?

250. Those who adorn the heavens, the world's blue eye,
 They come and go and back to the world they hie ;
 Under the breast of the earth and the skirt of the sky
 A people at rest with the Lord of the Worlds doth lie.¹

¹ An obscure quatrain, meaning apparently that the stars rise and set and rise again, but men, once dead, rest for ever in the earth. Variant of last two lines : " In the breast of the earth and the skirt of the heavens is a folk Shall aye be newborn till God Himself shall die," i.e. *Vedantic*, till the close of the aeon, when Gods and men alike return to nonentity. With this reading the whole quatrain would seem to apply to the stars.

251. This caravan of Life, since swift of flight it passeth,
 Enjoy the moment's space when in delight it passeth :
 Why fret thyself for friends and their to-morrow's troubles,
 Skinker? Come, fill the cup, for see the night, it passeth.

252. They come and straightway busy with strife and stress
 they are ;
 With pleasure still distracted, mirth and lisse they are :
 A cup they drink and waxing intoxicated straight,
 Heaped headlong in the slumber of nothingness they are.

253. Though to thine eyes the Fates make fair the world, give heed
 Unto a saw wherein the wise are all agreed :
 Thy portion seize of life, before Fate seize on thee,
 For many go, yet new, and others still succeed.

254. Dull patches, rotten both branch and root, how many
 there be !
 In the way of Truth who have set no foot, how many there be !
 Bigot and puffed hypocritical brute, how many there be !
 Backbiters of honest and good repute, how many there be !¹

¹ A quatrain directed at the poet's old enemies, the pietists and Soufis.

255. He who unapt faith's face to view anear is
 The problem thinks as running water clear is :
 The seeking for the Cause as sin to rail at
 In wise men's eyes nought else but folly sheer is.¹

¹ A hit at the enemies of freethought.

256. Th' Allwise, thy secrets all, both joy and pain, He knoweth ;
 Thy body, hair by hair and vein by vein, He knoweth :
 Grant with hypocrisy the folk thou may'st inveigle,
 How wilt thou do with Him, since heart and brain He knoweth ?

257. Since nothing will go to the wish of our heart,
 What boots all this stress and concern on our part ?
 Still hindered are we by this thought of regret,
 That too late have we come and too soon must depart.

258. Yon sphere oppression-using, faith-and-foundationless,
 There never yet was mortal it lightened of his stress :
 Nay, unto whom it spieth, that hath a wound at heart,
 Another wound it addeth for very wantonness.

259. I'm none to whom the thought of death a fear is ;
 More welcome it to me than life lack-cheer is :
 Life's but a loan from God to me, which gladly
 I'll render, when the time to render here is.

260. Proclamation anent thee to make I am fain,
 The purport whereof I'll abridge in words twain :
 My head in the dust for thy love I will lay
 And thy kindness shall cause me uplift it again.¹

¹ To the beloved.

261. The sage the bitter draught of vain repine drinks not ;
 Save of the winecup, brimmed with juice divine, drinks not :
 Let grief be in the heart, so wine be in the flask ;¹
 But plague on him who drinks of grief and wine drinks not !

¹ i.e., wine is the natural remedy for grief.

262. Withhold thy desire from the world, if content thou wouldst
 die ;
 From the good and the evil of Fortune sever the tie :
 With the course of the heavens foreordered rest content ;
 It lasts but a day ; e'en now it passeth by.¹

¹ The Upanishads teach that the gods are, like mortals, only a figment of Maya and that Heaven and Hell are transient like the world. "Death and Immortality are things which have no meaning in the sole life of the undifferentenced Self, to attain to the knowledge whereof a man must renounce all ties and forswear all desires."

263. Still on our guard in this life's sphere behoveth be ;
 Silent in this our world's career behoveth be :
 Whilst eye and ear and tongue with us in place abide,
 Still without eye and tongue and ear behoveth be.

264. Yon potter-fellows, that still have hand in clay,
 Forget that it, too, had soul and sense one day :
 Sure, they must think 't was the clay of the bad, that thus
 With kicks and buffets at it they pound away.

265. No night but all amazed my wit and will becometh ;
 My bosom full of pearls my eyes distil becometh :
 My head with wine, indeed, I cannot fill for passion ;
 The bowl turned upside down uneath to fill becometh.¹

¹ A play upon words. The "inverted bowl" is the poet's head, turned topsy-turvy with passion, and he complains that he cannot drink enough wine to fill it, i.e. drown his chagrin. N.B.—The Persians call the brain-pan (also the skull generally) "the bowl of the head."

266. Those who accomplished in learning and strength of spright
 have been,
 Those who for wit and wisdom their fellows' light have been,
 Out of this night of darkness e'en they no way have found ;
 Somewhat they said and taken of sleep forthright have been.

267. Those who the bondmen and lieges of reason and wit are
 Concerned with the care of To-be and To-be-not no whit are :
 Like those who are wise, choose the juice of the grape, for the
 know-nots,¹
 Ill-grape-like, dry up, or e'er for the winepress they fit are.

¹ i.e. those that are ignorant of the futility of thought-taking.

268. Good sense, which felicity's pathway doth trace,
 Still bids thee all day with the tongue of the case
 Make the most of this moment, for thou art no plant
 That they mow and that presently springs up apace.¹

¹ i.e., plants die and live anew ; but men, once dead, never live again. Var. of ll. 3 and 4 : "Enjoy this one moment of mirth ; for delight is a plant that grows hardly and fadeth apace."

269. What while my heart of passion yet the throne is,
 No mystery, meseems, to me unknown is ;
 But in cold blood my case when I consider,
 Life's passed and nothing learned of me, I own, is.¹

¹ i.e., "In hot youth every problem of life seems soluble ; but in age and cold blood one despairs of knowledge." "We poets in our youth begin in gladness, But thereof come in the end despondency and madness."—*Wordsworth*.

270. How many a night in research ne'er spent yet ! How many !
 How many outside themselves foot never set ! How many !
 How many a churl in fine raiment doth jet ! How many !
 How many fair fame with backbiting beset ! How many !

271. A pottle-cup to-night brimful of wine I'll make ;
 Shift with the same twice filled, without repine, I'll make :
 Reason and religion thrice I will divorce¹ and then
 The daughter of the grape² my concubine I'll make.

¹ A divorce, thrice pronounced, is by Mohammedan law irrevocable.
² i.e. wine.

272. How long thus the bondman of colour and air¹ wilt thou be ?
 How long in pursuit of each foul thing and fair wilt thou be ?
 Though the fountain of Zemzem² thou wert or the Water of Life,
 At last in the dust laid and buried for e'er wilt thou be.

¹ i.e., of sensual illusion, "the Veil of Maya" of the Vedas. ² The well-known holy spring at Mecca. Var. *chashma-i-sahr*, "fount of poison" ; which is much the same thing, as the Zemzem water is said to be practically poison, or at least choleraic, being full of sewage contamination (see Burton's Pilgrimage) ; but Khayyam, who had been to Mecca, evidently speaks of it here in the orthodox Muslim sense, as a sort of spiritual fountain of life.

273. Yon Maker¹ of bowls,² the bowl of the costard whó made,
 In making of bowls His skill apparent to view made :
 He set the bowl upside down on the board of our being,
 And thus inverted, it full of passion's brew made.³

¹ The Creator.
 human skull.

² The bowl, throughout this quatrain, means the
³ This is a curious quatrain, the conceit (or *industrie*, as the old French writers call it) of which is that the Creator, not content with turning men's heads topsy-turvy, i.e. filling them with confusion and perplexity, must needs add thereto the element of passion.

274. What things in these colours of earth and of skies are
 Indwelling,¹ enigmas in prudent men's eyes are :
 Look thou lose not the end of the clew of discretion,
 For head still a-whirl with this puzzle the wise are.²

¹ Lit. "the bodies which are the inhabitants of these colours." Var. "the bodies (the stars?) that are the inhabitants of this palace (the heavens?)."

² An obscure quatrain, meaning app. "Trouble not thyself with the enigmas of creation, which are a puzzle to the wisest, but follow the dictates of common-sense *vinoque pellite curas*."

275. Each dawn, when the face of the tulip the dew takes,
 The violet's stature to bending in two takes :
 So, if sorrow the skirts of the soul draw together,
 My spirit from sorrow advantage anew takes.¹

¹ i.e., "affliction is a good, if it fortify the soul in dependence on itself."

276. 'T is the time when with verdure the world THEY adorn ;
 The white hand of Moses¹ thrusts forth from the thorn ;
 From the face of the earth Jesus-breathed ones² are born
 And there open out eyes in the clouds of the morn.³

¹ The white hand of Moses, due, according to the Bible, to leprosy, is considered by the Mohammedans (owing to misreading or garbling of the passage in question) a beauty and is used by them to express anything bright and shining: here it means the sudden breaking-out of the bushes (as in the quick-developing Spring of the East) into blossom, causing them to appear white and resplendent as they fable the hand of the Hebrew prophet to have shown, when he drew it forth of his bosom at Jehovah's command. ² "Jesus-breathed ones," i.e., sweet-scented flowers, whose breath, like that of Jesus, would revive the dead. ³ i.e., "the clouds break up and rain down in beneficent showers."

277. Whoso in these days but a half-loaf of bread hath
 And a doorway or threshold for session and bed hath,
 Who of none's either servant or served, bid live merry,
 For the chief of the world's good the wight, when all's said, hath.

278. Harsh Fortune upraises no rose from the clay
 But she breaks and commits it again to decay :
 Dust and water, as clouds, if aloft she convey,¹
 The blood of the noble she sheddeth for aye.

¹ i.e. "if she exalt the vile."

279. Out of yon End-in-clay,¹ that store of rare old wine hath,
 Fill, for my heart to drink withouten stint incline hath :
 Away with all desire for earthly good ! The world
 Beneath the earth² a maw yet thirstier than mine hath.³

¹ "End-in-clay," i.e., the winejar, pointed, amphora-fashion, at the end, which they stick in the earth. ² i.e. "the all-devouring grave."

³ This quatrain is full of untranslatable word-play. *Ser-i-gil*, "end-in-clay," is used, instead of "pitcher," for the sake of the jingle with *as ser-i-gil*, "on account of the clay," i.e. "of the world and its goods," and with *jehan der sir-i-gil*, "the world under the clay."

280. That day when retribution of every kind will be,
 According to thy merits thy fate assigned will be :
 For excellence endeavour, for on the Judgment Day
 E'en as thine actions, surely, thy doom thou'lt find will be.

281. Ere fate on thee fall like a thief in the gloom,
 Call for wine of the hue of the rose in full bloom.
 Art thou gold, O thou heedless know-nothing, that thee
 They should bury and after dig up from earth's womb ?

282. When I'm dead, in God's name, small account of my clay
 do ye make¹
 And my case an example to those of the day do ye make :
 My ashes, in fine, look ye moisten with wine and thereof
 A tile on the mouth of the winejar to lay do ye make.

¹ *Kem sâid*, lit. "make small," i.e. belittle, Scotch "lichtlie."

283. Those who for self-conceit delusion's prey become are,
 In quest of Heaven and *Hour*¹ who led away become are,
 What time the Fates uplift the curtain, 't will be seen
 That they from Thee, O God, far, far astray become are.

¹ *Hour*, i.e. *Ahour*, pl. of *Ahaurs*, a houri of Paradise, originally *Ahour-ul-'ain*, "black-eyed [women]."

284. Wine renounceth none who resolute of spright is;
 Wine, which e'en as Life's water to the wight is:
 If in Ramazan one must abstain from somewhat,
 Abstinence from prayer, meseemeth, the more right is.

285. Behoveth not plant in the heart the tree of chagrin;
 Behoveth the book of liesse still study in;
 Behoveth drink wine and the heart's wish seek to win,
 For 't is patent how long¹ thou'lt bide in this earthly inn.

¹ i.e. "how little long."

286. What time that the blue dawn breaketh on day to be,
 With winecup in hand it behoveth thee aye to be:
 They tell us that truth is bitter in mouths of men,
 And wine by this token the truth¹ we may say to be.

¹ *Hhaec*, one of the names of God, commonly used in the East to signify the Deity; hence, by implication, "Wine is God."

187. In the time when announcement of roses fresh-blossomed
 for sale they make,
 Command that the winecup brimming with liquor, good tale,
 they make:
 Concern not thyself with pavilions and houris, with Heaven and
 Hell;
 For these, of themselves announcement, I trow, without fail they
 make.¹

¹ "If thou be destined to Heaven or Hell, these will come to thee of their own accord, unsought."—*Luck. Comm.* "Pavilions" in l. 3 mean the promised habitations of the faithful in Paradise.

188. They say that in Heaven girls black of eyne will be,
 That there pure honey and unmixed wine will be:
 If wine and wanton we worship, 't is lawful, then,
 Since the end of the matter the same, in fine, will be.

189. What time for the race of yore Heaven's coursers yare
 THEY made,¹
 When Mushteri² and Perwin³ to hang i' the air THEY made,
 This portion of ours was written in Heaven's chancery:
 Marry, what blame, then, is ours, since this to our share THEY
 made?

¹ i.e., "when THEY (Fate and Fortune Foreordained) set the celestial system in motion," i.e. "on Creation's Day." ² Jupiter. ³ The Pleiades.

290. Those who of sheer old wine unmingled drinkers deep are,
And those who still a-nights in the prayer-niche watch-a-keep are,
Not one is on dry land ; i' the water all a-heap are ;
But *one* of them 's awake, whilst t' others all asleep are.¹

¹ I.e., " toper and devotee are alike at sea as to the enigmas of creation, but the former is awake, whilst the latter is asleep."

291. Drink, for the jasmine oft flow' red high again will be ;
Live blithe, for Suha¹ oft i' the sky again will be ;
On th' marge o' the sward live blithe, for many a sward will bloom
When thou gone back to nought and I again will be.

¹ *Suha*, an obecure star in Ursa Minor, commonly used by the Orientals as a test of sight.

292. No night that my lament to Gemini attains not,
That my tears' torrent-course unto the sea attains not.
Sayst thou, " I'll drink with thee, but not until to-morrow " ?
To-morrow it may be that life for me attains not.

293. O friends, when in concord to meet rendezvous ye make,
When your hearts with each other's charms glad anew ye make,
When the cupbearer taketh the wine of the Magians¹ in hand,
Lo, mention, with prayer, of poor Such-an-one² do ye make !³

¹ i.e. old wine. ² Kheyyam himself. ³ " i.e., say ' God have mercy on him ! ' "—*Luck. Comm.* An appeal for remembrance after death.

294. Right pleasant, nor hot neither cold, is the day ;¹
 The rain from the rose-bed the dust's washed away :
 To the yellow²-cheeked rose, hark ! the bulbul doth say,
 With the tongue of our case, " Come, drink wine and be gay ! "

¹ App. a reminiscence of Firdausi, " The warmth of that land is not hot and the coolth of it is not cold." ² " Yellow," *Persic?*, = " pale." The yellow rose is likened by the poet to a lover pale with unsatisfied desire.

295. Thy life, how long in self-adorement will it pass ?
 In quest of IS, IS NOT,¹ say, wilt thou still it pass ?
 Drink, for a life, that's dogged with care and doom, 't were best
 In drunkenness or sleep, for lesser ill, it pass.

¹ i.e. in puzzling over the problems of Existence and Non-existence.

296. Drink wine, for in dust when thy body shall dust be,
 Of thy clay made shall winepots and jars to hold must be ;
 Neither reck thou of Heaven nor Hell : why deluded
 In a life such as this should the wise and the just be ?

297. In love insincere neither lustre nor might is ;
 Therein, like a fire that's half dead, heat nor light is :
 The true lover's he for whom ease nor repose,
 Neither sleep neither food, month nor year, day nor night is.

298. God in Heaven to be promise us of wine made ;
 Why, then, here a sin hath He thus of wine made ?
 Hemzeh's¹ camel halt overplus of wine² made ;
 Whence our Prophet ban despiteous of wine made.

¹ Hemzeh (*Hemzeh*), Mohammed's uncle and standard-bearer, called by his nephew "The Lion of God." He was killed at the battle of Uhud, and it is said that on one occasion a drunken Arab hamstringed his camel, whereupon Mohammed, in despite, prohibited wine-drinking to the faithful ; though other traditions give a different version of the origin of the prohibition. ² *Khemrah*, var. "a man of the Arabs."

299. Now that of heart's content but mem'ry mine remaineth,
 That nought in hand except the cup of wine remaineth,
 Cupbearer, from the bowl the hand of mirth withhold not ;
 No housemate meet for me but the juice o' the vine¹ remaineth.

¹ Lit., "no cooked (i.e., tried, worthy) housemate . . . but raw (i.e., sheer, unboiled) wine."

300. They say that Heaven and Kauthir and *Hour* exist indeed,
 That there is honeyed wine for the pietist indeed :
 Fill up the winecup, skinker ; for better far for me
 Than twenty birds in bush is one in fist indeed.

301. Those who life in high station and place pass away
 All at last poor and bare from earth's face pass away :
 "Poor! poor!" they cry, dying; as also do they
 Who their time in good works and in grace pass away.¹

¹ The *Lucknow Commentator* says that Kheyyam here alludes to Mohammed's saying, "O God, let me live and die poor and raise me up with the host of the poor!" (Because, as he explained, according to the "Mishkat ul Mesabih," the poor enter heaven forty years in advance of the rest of mankind.) But the connection does not appear, and indeed the quatrain seems rather to be a paraphrase of the Atmapuranopanishad: "The rich are filled with anguish in the hour of death, and like theirs is the sorrow of those in a paradise upon the expiry of their merits. The sorrow of these latter is like the sorrow of the rich at the loss of their riches."

302. So walk in the world that its people salute thee not;
 So live with the folk that worth note they repute thee not:
 In the mosque an thou go, on such wise go that the folk
 To the front call thee not and Imám¹ constitute thee not.²

¹ *Imám*, leader of the people at prayer, a post of honour commonly conferred on notably orthodox and learned Muslims. ² An exhortation to lead a quiet and unnoticed life, as best befits the philosopher.

303. In reason's way, save reason, still accept thou not;¹
 When the good friend's at hand, the ill accept thou not:
 Wilt thou that all the world accept of thee, indeed?
 Live blithe, and thine own self and will accept thou not.²

¹ i.e., "In matters, which are of the competence of the reason, hearken to nothing but reason." ² An idiomatic expression, meaning, "Be not self-willed or conceited."

304. Wilt have the lore¹ of myst'ries to thee for need arrive ?
 Look that no hurt to any do by thy deed arrive :²
 Let not thy heart be troubled for death or daily bread,
 For both in their own season will as of need arrive.

¹ *Rutbeh*, lit. "the degree, station, stage"; i.e., "wilt thou gain initiation into the mysteries of theosophy?" Kheyyam here, as elsewhere, uses the Soufi terminology, which is as much common property with Persian poets as that of the Bible with our own writers. ² The advice, as a condition precedent, to purify oneself of evil-dealing, in thought and deed, towards one's fellows, is that given by every theosophic and mystical sect to the student of occult philosophy. Cf. the Upanishads, "Le Comte de Gabalis" and the manuals of mysticism generally. *Mitleid*, sympathy with and kindness to all, the Vedantic "tenderness towards all sentient creatures," is a salient point of Kheyyam's creed.

305. Of the Sphere they discourse with palaver galore ;
 These dunces the jewel of science would bore :¹
 Since the secrets of Heaven are not for their ken,
 First a little they prate ; then they sleep evermore.

¹ The Orientals commonly bore jewels, instead of setting them, and use them, strung together and singly, for ornamental purposes. "To bore the jewel of science," id. = "To crack the nut of knowledge, solve the problem."

306. All asses these people of ours, wellaway ! are ;
 Loud-sounding and hollow, like kettledrums, they are :
 Wouldst thou have them the sole of thy feet kiss, good name get ;
 For the bondmen of hearsay the folk of the day are.

307. Drink wine, for away from the soul despair it beareth,
 The thought of both worlds and all their care it beareth :
 This liquid fire choose, for lo ! 't is the Water of Life :
 What matter if thee to the earth and the air¹ it beareth ?

¹ i.e. "to ruin and nothingness." The point here is the bringing-in of the four elements.

308. Drink wine, for the thought from thee of plenty and
 dearth 't will bear ;
 The cark of the threescore and twelve creeds of the earth 't will
 bear.

Shun not this Elixir of Life, for, drink but a pottle thereof,
 A thousand ailments and pains away in the birth 't will bear.

309. When the soul's house void of the bride¹ within becometh,
 Each part resolved to its origin becometh :
 This ghittern of life, with the temperament for strings,
 Untuned by the touch of Time's plucking-pin becometh.²

¹ "Bride," i.e. the soul. ² i.e., "when we die, each part of us returns to its original source (the elements), and the ghittern of life is untuned and stricken dumb by the rough stroke of the plectrum of Fate or Time." A highly poetical conceit.

310. Quoth all who live godly that, as a man dies,
 On like fashion again from the tomb he shall rise ;
 For which reason to wanton and wine we apply,
 So mayhap THEY shall raise us again on like wise.¹

¹ i.e., "that we may find wine and wanton awaiting us at the Resurrection." Cf. Walter Mapes' "Confessio Goliath," ll. 45-8 : "Meum est propositum in tabernâ mori ; Vinum sit appositum morientis ori, Ut dicant, cum venerint angelorum chori, 'Deus sit propitius huic potatori.'"

311. Companions, my heart, come, merry with wine do ye make,
 And my face, amber-hued,¹ as rubies to shine do ye make !
 With wine, when I'm dead, this body of mine do ye wash,
 And the planks of my bier of the wood of the vine do ye make.

¹ The lover's colour : see previous note.

312. When the thought of my sins my mind for a space over-
 passeth,
 For the fire of my breast, the sweat all my face overpasseth :
 Yet the usance it is, when the slave of his error repenteth,
 The master he serves his fault of his grace overpasseth.

313. A thousand religions one goblet of wine is worth ;
 All China one draught of the juice of the vine is worth :
 What's goodlier than wine on the face of the universe ?
 A thousand sweet lives¹ its bitter, in fine, is worth.

¹ *Jan-i-shirîn*, Pers. equivalent for our "dear life."

314. When Fore-eternal Love¹ my being first created,
 Even from the first to me Love's lesson it dictated ;
 Ay, and of this my heart's scrap-metal base the key
 Unto the treasures of Vision It created.

¹ Lit. "the Love of Eternity-without-beginning"; i.e., the Primal Intelligence, Dante's *Amor che muove il sole e l'altre stelle*.

315. In the winehouse ablution,¹ save with wine, one cannot make ;
 And the name that is sullied fair and fine one cannot make :
 Live blithe, for so ragged and rent it is that whole again
 This veil of decorum² of yours and mine one cannot make.

¹ Alluding to the canonical ablution before prayer. ² i.e. repute.

316. The Festival's come and matters aright will set ;
 Yea, wine in the flagon Kheyyam to-night will set ;
 From the headstall of prayer and the halter of fasting free
 The heads of us asses the new moon's sight will set.¹

¹ The sight of the new moon of Shewwal, the month following Ramazan, marks the end of the Fast, and it is therefore called "The New Moon of the Festival."

317. Beware lest grief and dole thy stronghold on thee take,
 Lest fear of Fortune's might and craft hold on thee take :
 Wine on the greensward drink, hard by the running stream,
 Ere in the grave its wreak the earth-mould on thee take.

318. At the Rising,¹ they tell us, the devil to pay will be,
 And yonder good Friend² ill-conditioned (they say) will be.
 From Absolute Good³ nought cometh but good ; rest blithe,
 For all in the end for the best that day will be.

¹ The Resurrection. ² God. ³ An epithet of God.

319. Take heart, for yet new the festival moon will be
 And none in distress for the needed boon will be.¹
 Bethink thee, skinker, if wine thou give us or not,
 Our heads in the dust laid low eftsoon will be.²

¹ i.e., Shewwal will soon be here and will relieve us all from the duresse of the Fast. ² i.e., death is inevitable, whether we drink or not.

320. In the hour of the Term,¹ when an end of my case THEY
 make,
 Look no vain words o'er my resting-place they make;
 And when on my tomb the tile² they will set, be sure
 Its clay that with wine, not water base, they make.

¹ *Aja'*, i.e. death. ² *Kharak*, the tile or brick of adobe with which they close up the recess (*lakh*) wherein the corpse of a deceased Muslim is buried.

321. Life's every moment, yet thine to pass away,
 Be sure with gladness and wine to pass away;
 For lo! the usance of this world's capital, life,
 Is still to dwindle and syne to pass away.

322. Hope-befooled, to the winds I have given Life's season
 Nor of Time one glad day have I had; for which reason
 I fear me lest Fate, of its spite, time deny me
 Enough that my wreak I may take of Time's treason.

323. Not once hath Heaven my heart's need done me ;
 Not once hath Fortune a good deed done me,
 Nor once hath suffered me draw a breath in gladness
 But, ere it was nigh, a thousand spites she'd done me.

324. A man, that's a man in truth, behoveth be ;
 In pain, head to foot, for Love's ruth behoveth be :
 Love's lesson ever behoveth con and dust
 In the street of the Friend, forsooth, behoveth be.¹

¹ i.e., it behoveth one be a man worthy of the name and sacrifice all for love.

325. My wretched body, that rotteth in strangerhood,
 Hath never tasted the sweets of home and good ;
 Life passeth and ne'er have I known a gladsome mood :
 I wonder me when¹ is the term of my servitude !²

¹ *Kuja*, syn. where? ² i.e., "when (or where) shall I die?" or
 "when (or where) will my troubles end?"

326. Me erst, willy nilly, to being He brought
 Nor by life, save amaze, to me added hath aught :
 With regret we depart and of that which is sought
 By our coming and being and going know nought.

327. Those the jewels of meaning who study to bore
 On God's essence enlarge with discoursements galore ;
 But the end of the clew of the myst'ry none knows ;
 First some little they prate ; then they sleep, and all's o'er.

328. They who're the cream and the flower of the world of their kind,

They to the zenith who urge the Borác¹ of the mind,
In the end, like the firmament, giddy and head-upside-down,²
All a-whirl with the knowledge of Thee themselves do they find.

¹ *Borac*, the nondescript animal (a sort of winged mule) on which Mohammed is fabled to have made his famous nocturnal trip to heaven. ² The Persian poets are fond of comparing the sky to an inverted cup and assuming it, for the purpose of simile, to be thus head-turned and giddy, to boot, with the perpetual rotation about the earth with which it was credited in ante-Galilean times.

329. Easance and mirth from wine, 't was ever seen, arise :
When in thy nature drought and cold of spleen arise,
If thou drink wine, forthright thou'lt rosy-faced become,
For yellow cheeks and pale from eating green¹ arise.

¹ i.e. from the ascetic's diet of potherbs.

330. Sick am I ; fever each bone of mine still holdeth ;
Life in its danger lack of wine still holdeth.
Mark but this marvel ; all for me I feed on,
Wine but, in sickness, harm, in fine, still holdeth.

331. With a fair-faced maid and wine rose-red, by the streamlet's
brink,
Of ease and leisure I'll take my pleasure nor pause to think :
I was not aye, but am to-day and yet will be ;
I've drunk of yore and drink e'ermore and yet will drink.

332. Be of good cheer, for Time unbounded will be ;
 Yon star-spangled sphere above still rounded will be ;
 Yea, bricks of thy clay ere long they'll fashion, whereon
 The walls of the dwellings of others founded will be.

333. Ramazan, when, as now, in the season of summer it come is,¹
 As a shackle full sore on the fetlock of sense and wit come is :
 Lord, make thou the folk to be heedless, so they may imagine
 The night of Shewwál, with its joy-bringing crescent lit, come is !²

¹ The Muslim system of reckoning time being lunar, the Fast-month runs the gamut of the months of the year in regular succession ; and when it falls in the hot weather, the obligation of fasting from day-peep to dusk becomes very burdensome. ² As before noted, the sight of the new moon of Shewwal marks the end of the Fast.

334. Alas, for Youth's¹ book² is rolled up and cast by !
 This fresh Spring of joyance hath flitted fast by !
 Yon bird of delight, Adolescence³ y-clept,
 How⁴ came it I know not, nor how⁴ it past by !

¹ *Juwaní*, i.e. the period between childhood and puberty. ² The ancient "book" was, of course, a scroll. ³ *Shabab*, i.e. the period

between puberty and manhood ; by neglecting the difference between which and *juwaní*, previous translators have blunted the point of this quatraine.

⁴ Syn. "when" (*kā*).

335. The toper, though rich, in the end poor and bare is;
 The world with the din of his riot a-scare is.
 Yon emerald¹ I'll pour in the casket of ruby²
 Till blinded the eye of the asp of my care is.³

¹ *Zumurrud*, i.e. "wine" (*Luck. Comm.*). Nicolas renders *zumurrud* "hashish," and says that ² "the casket of ruby" (i.e. the cup of copper, red earthenware or glass) is the bowl of the hookah or water-pipe (*shadyan*); but, *quære*, is hashish ever smoked in a hookah? Hafiz and other Oriental poets call wine "emerald," and Homer speaks of the dark-green sea as being *oinops* or wine-coloured. The Orientals are peculiar in their use of colour-names and incline to call dark-coloured things indifferently blue, green, black and even brown. Thus, the Arabs call dark-red lips "dark-brown" or even "black," and style full-blooded buck-niggers "green people"; and Hafiz and Kheyyam both speak of the blue sky as "green," with which latter colour they also credit the black down, i.e. the incipient beard and moustache, upon the face. Kheyyam also speaks of wine as "dark or bluish-green" (*mina*) in a later quatrain (No. 793), where I have rendered the epithet by its secondary meaning "crystalline," as being "glassy," from *mina*, "glass." Besides, I doubt if Kheyyam ever used hashish: see post, Quatrain 716, where he declares against the latter, as far inferior to wine (Quatrain 450, in which he recommends the alternative use of *bang* as a cure for chagrin, is probably a spurious interpolation of later date); and indeed, to my mind, the word "emerald" is only introduced for the sake of the metaphor in the last line. ³ The emerald is supposed by the Orientals (who have many superstitions as to the occult properties of various gems) to possess the virtue of blinding serpents. I translate, from the great Turkish Commentary of Soudi on Hafiz, the following anecdote on the subject, which he tells apropos of Ghazel xvii, 4, of the Shirazi poet: "Quoth one of the chief of the folk: 'I went one day to Amid,' the old name of Diarbeker, 'by the little desert and by the side of the road I saw a serpent lying. Suddenly it raised its head and looking at me, fell over on its back. I knew not what to think of this; but a cadi, a man

of learning, who was with me, said to me, "What is the stone in your ring?" Quoth I, "It is an emerald"; and he, "He perished by reason of his seeing that." Quoth I, "Explain to me the reason of this." So he expounded to me the properties of the emerald, and since that time I have never gone without an emerald about me.'" From this it appears that the mere sight of the emerald (which is considered unlucky by Europeans) is supposed, in Mesopotamia at least, to be fatal to snakes. It may be remarked, by the way, that Soudi's Commentary above mentioned is a treasury of anecdote and information on the subject of mediaeval Persia, and it is a pity that it has never yet, to my knowledge, been translated into a current European language, especially as it is the *only* commentary which ventures to grapple with the innumerable difficulties and obscurities of text of the great Persian poet, all other commentators insisting upon explaining him *mystically*, which of course merely begs the question and is no explanation at all. Such a translation, however, would be a difficult task, requiring peculiar qualifications on the part of the undertaker, as the work is written in Bosnian (i.e. provincial) Turkish of the seventeenth century and contains thousands of words and phrases which are not to be found in the dictionaries; so that the reader is compelled to make his own supplemental dictionary, as he goes along, by a laborious process of analysis, comparison and (last, but not least) intuition; a process, by the by, of which I myself have had ample experience in the course of my labours upon the translation of the Book of the Thousand Nights and one Night and that (now in progress) of Hafiz. As says the latter, none but the wayfarer knows the troubles and dangers of the way, and on like wise none but the Oriental scholar has any conception of the colossal difficulties which beset the path of the conscientious translator of Oriental works and of which one of the greatest is the phenomenal insufficiency (altogether inconceivable to those who are accustomed to the well-surveyed and minutely mapped-out ways of Greek and Latin scholarship and to the broad daylight of European philological science) of Oriental dictionaries and works of reference generally. Speaking for myself, I may say that I have had incidentally to prepare, for my own use, voluminous supplements to the dictionaries of all three of the Oriental tongues, Arabic, Persian and Turkish, with which I have been concerned.

336. For the scantling of ease and delight the Maker establisheth
 For the sake of the naked souls of earth and sea 'stablisheth,
 Each man by divorcement¹ transformed becometh in sleep;
 He gaineth his ease and himself in heaven he 'stablisheth.²

¹ i.e. from the body. ² A very obscure quatrain, apparently meaning "What little ease and solace God has created is only to be enjoyed by the incorporeal soul, as it is set free by divorcement from the body in sleep; i.e., it is only a dream." Cf. the Vedantic "Dreamless sleep, like ecstasy, is union with the one and only being," i.e. the Self, "which perdures: the sleeper's personality has passed back into the impersonality of the true Self, and this state, if it could be prolonged for ever, would be a final refuge from the miseries of life."—Gough's Upanishads.

337. The standard of sev'rance, to-morrow furled will it be;
 At the wine, with good auspice, to-morrow birled will it be:
 Belovèd consenting and Fortune good-humoured, to-day
 If merry I make not, say, when in the world will it be?

338. Since in this age for reason nor profit is nor place
 And none save those who lack it can boast of Fortune's grace,
 Bring forth, then, of that liquor which reason doth efface,
 So Fortune shall to-us-ward belike incline her face.

339. The tavern repeopled¹ with winebibbers lét be
 And fire to the skirt of the pietists sét be!
 Yon hundred-patch coat² and yon gown of blue wool,³
 'Neath the feet of the dreg-drainers⁴ cast may they yét be!

¹ Syn. *the ruins rebuilt*; note the word-play. ² The distinctive garment of the dervish, the more valued the more it is patched and handed down from one pietist to another till it drops in pieces. ³ The distinctive garment of the Soufis (lit. "woollen ones," from *souf*, wool, the devotees' wear, silk being prohibited to the strict Muslim). Blue, as the colour of the heavens, is specially affected by the devout Mohammedan. ⁴ i.e. thoroughgoing topers, who drain the cup to the dregs.

340. No man in this our world a rose-cheeked fair attaineth to,
 But, by Fate's spite, his heart a thorn of care attaineth to.
 Consider but the comb; an hundred teeth 't is cut in
 Or e'er its hand a tress of lovelings' hair attaineth to.

341. Love of Hour-like maids in my head ever be!
 In my hand may the grape-juice rose-red ever be!
 "God give thee repentance!" quoth they. Though He gave,
 I'd not do.¹ May it far from my stead ever be!

¹ i.e., "I would not repent, even if God gave me grace to do so."

342. With the water of want the seed of me sown have THEY;
 With the fire of chagrin the soul of me grown have THEY:
 For ever, like wind, I wander about the world,
 Till my dust to the wind of nonentity strown have THEY.

343. Those who have laid down their heads for death's sleep in
 the clay
 Of question and answer are quit till the Judgment Day.
 How long "None returneth with news from the dead" wilt
 thou say?
 Marry, what should they give us to know, since nothing know
 they?

344. Repent thou not from wine, if wine betide for thee;
 Regrets an hundredfold will else abide for thee:
 When the rose rends her robe¹ and the bulbuls break into song,
 How were repentance right at such a tide for thee?

¹ i.e. breaks into bloom.

345. When the Friend¹ of the soul-expanding wine giveth me not,
 Heav'n kisses on hand and foot of mine giveth me not.²
 They bid me of toping repent in time. Repent, indeed
 How can I, if God of His grace Divine giveth me not ?

¹ i.e. the beloved. ² i.e., Fortune is not my slave, is not subservient to me. The kiss of the foot is the especial sign of reverence and submission from slave to master in Eastern countries.

346. Past Destiny's curtain admitted to fare is none ;
 Of the hidden secrets of Heaven aware is none :
 Somewhat, by way of conjecture, each sayeth ; but nought
 Is known and of all the myst'ries solved there is none.

347. If one in two days a loaf of dry bread can gain
 And a draught from a broken gugglet of water plain,
 Commanded of one like himself what booteth him be ?
 And why he should serve another I ask in vain.

348. With wine and sweetheart, the cup to fill, behoveth be ;
 Afar from the world, by the marge of the rill, behoveth be :
 This pleasance of life, like the rose, is ten days long :
 Meanwhile, laughing-lipped and fresh-faced still behoveth be.

349. With a rose-faced fair my very soul conjoined is ;
 My hand with the flask and the brimming bowl conjoined is :
 Yea, every part of my lot on earth I'll joy in,
 Ere my every part with the One Great Whole conjoined is.¹

¹ Absolute Pantheism.

350. Since Venus and moon first appeared in the sky,
 Nothing better than wine hath been seen of man's eye :
 At the sellers of wine still in wonder am I,
 For what better than that which they sell will they buy ?

351. The moon of Ramazan, they say, hath been espied,
 Whereafter without wine a month behoveth bide :
 Next year, such floods of wine I'll drink in late Shebán¹
 That drunk I shall remain until the Feast betide.²

i.e. the month preceding Ramazan. ² i.e. till the end of the Fast.

352. My friends if ye be, a term to vain prate do ye set,
 And yourselves with sheer wine my woes to abate do ye set :
 When I'm passed from this life, a brick of my clay let them make,
 And the same in a hole of the wine-house's wall do ye set.¹

¹ i.e., instead of burying me, make bricks of my clay and stop with them, not the canonical opening in the recess of the tomb, but a hole in the wall of the tavern, where my soul will be.

353. Those who in quest of Him¹ have worn earth's face away,
 Who've measured with their feet the worlds of Night and Day,
 Ne'er have I heard, for all their travailing, that they
 The case, such as it is indeed, have fathomed aye.

¹ God? But *erā* may here mean "it," i.e. the secret of the world's case, the mystery of life.

354. Since my clay in the mould first kneaded about have THEY
 And after commixed with trouble and doubt have THEY,
 God wotteth I cannot be better than that which I am,
 For me on this wise from the cruzet poured out have THEY.

355. Wine I drink and like me who a child of the light is,
 His drinking of wine but a straw in God's sight is :¹
 From Eternity God my winebibbing foreknoweth :
 If I drink not, His prescience made ign'rance outright is.

¹ Var. of lines 1 and 2 : "Wine I drink and to whoso a man of insight is,
 My drinking of wine but a thing passing slight is."

356. The crux of the secrets of heaven solved hath none yet ;
 Nor eke withoutside of his nature foot hath one set :
 When I look, from beginner to master, I see, with regret,
 In all born of woman's but weakness and hindrance and let.

357. From the Book of Life effaced needs must we be ;
 By the hand of Doom laid waste needs must we be :
 Skinker, thou moonface, our heart's delight, give wine,
 For dust in the dust abased needs must we be.

358. Wine feather and wing to the sorrowful soul is ;
 To the cheek of the intellect wine as a mole is :¹
 None this Ramazan-tide have we drunk ; but 't is over ;
 Come the festival-night and the end of our dole is.

¹ A curious conceit. Lit. "Wine is the mole on the cheek of the lady of the intellect." *Khatoun-i-khird*, "the lady of the intellect," is merely a flowery way of saying "the intellect" simply. We have already seen that Kheyyam speaks of "the bride of the soul" and "the World-bride," when "soul" and "world" only are respectively meant.

359. Those who to men wish ill nowise their will attain ;
 For one hurt done, themselves an hundred still attain :
 Marry, I wish thee well, and thou, thou wiltst me harm ;
 No good thereof doth thee and me no ill attain.

360. From a folk that are asses what wilt thou of weal ?
 Dost thou think that for learning with thee they will deal ?
 Not once yearly they 'll give thee stream-water to drink ;
 But thy face-water¹ hundredfold daily they 'll steal.

¹ *Ab-i-rovi*, "face-water," id. = "honour, repute," used here for sake of word-play with *ab-i-joni*, stream-water.

361. O happy the lot of that man who unknown hath been,
 Who in silk clad nor wool nor culrass nor zone hath been !¹
 Whose flight, like Simúrgh,² to the Heaven of the Throne³ hath
 been
 Nor, owl-like, content in earth's ruins to moan hath been.⁴

¹ i.e., who hath been neither man of the world, soldier or Soufi (for pietist generally). ² *Simurgá*, lit. "thirty birds," the name of a fabulous bird of Eastern romance, so called as being equal in size to thirty ordinary birds.

³ The Emphyrean or highest heaven, where is the throne of God. ⁴ Eulogy of the contemplative and world-abstracted life of the servant of the ideal.

362. Alack, for life's stock still to ruin and nought goes
 And many a heart at doom's hand blood-y-fraught goes !¹
 From yonder² none cometh of whom I may question
 How't with those who that land of the secret have sought goes.

¹ Lit. "goes full of blood," syn. (id.) perishes. ² i.e. the other world.

363. What time to the lucky to-morrow the lot give THEY,¹
 A portion to me, poor disconsolate sot, give THEY:
 If I'm good, of the good let THEM count me; or else with the
 bad,
 To me, then, forgiveness, if good I be not, give THEY!

¹ i.e. when rewards and punishments are allotted on the Judgment Day.

364. Those in the practice of wisdom who strive and strain,
 Alas, for to milk the draught-ox they labour in vain!
 Better the vesture of folly it were they'd ta'en,
 Since wine-dregs to-day for wisdom to sell they're fain.

¹ By this last "they" the people of Kheyyam's time are meant.

365. When to fasting and prayer late my nature inclined was,
 Methought, sure, attained the whole wish of my mind was:
 Alack, for the fast with a half-draught avoided,
 The ablution annulled with a letting of wind was!¹

¹ The canons of the obligatory ablution before prayer must be strictly observed, and very slight matters, such as the letting of wind mentioned in the text, suffice to avoid it and so make the succeeding prayer ineffectual. The poet's meaning is that he had heard so much of the miraculous efficacy of fasting and prayer that, when he had at last brought himself to try them, he expected to have all his desires fulfilled to him in consequence; but, unluckily, he was unable to refrain from taking a half-draught of wine and so avoiding the fast; nor could he help letting wind and so annulling the ablution and consequently the prayer.

366. Each draught wherewithal the skinker besprinkleth our clay
 The fire of chagrin in the eye of a man doth allay;
 Yea, glory to God! an elixir, believe me, is wine,
 That an hundred heart-pains from the soul of thee doth away!

367. Since the hand to the skirt of the goal attaineth not,
 To the wish of the heart since the soul attaineth not,
 Come, fill me a cup, for man to a draught unmixed
 Of wine from yon turquoise bowl¹ attaineth not.²

¹ i.e. heaven.

² i.e., none enjoyeth the unalloyed favour of Fortune.

368. For a somewhat of down on the cheek of the fair that
 a-sprout's become,
 Deem not that her loveliness less, indeed, or in doubt's become :
 Nay, in the garth of her cheek, for the pleasance-place of the soul,
 The rose-bed with verdure¹ again encompassed about's become.

¹ The Orientals consider the dark down on the cheeks of their young women a beauty and call it "green," in allusion to the first minute blades of grass.

369. Blood from the heart full of care forth ever cometh,
 From the eye still a-rain for despair forth ever cometh :
 If blood from my eyelashes come, forsooth, 't is no wonder ;
 The rose from the thorns¹ everywhere forth ever cometh.

¹ Eyelashes likened to thorns from their shape and pointedness.

370. In the pathway of Love the best and the purest unclean are ;
 In the questing thereof the highest and greatest all mean are :
 To-day, night and morn, the counterpart is of to-morrow ;
 They the morrow that seek like to die in the morrow's chagrin are.

371. Since without us our lot on earth foreordered THEY,
 Why, then, its good and bad upon our shoulders lay ?
 The days, in our despite, still pass : on what pretext,
 Then, cite us to account upon the Judgment Day ?

372. The foeman, who evil in me anew still seeth,
 Sure, nowise by way of judgment true still seeth :
 The glass of his heart it is whereon he looketh,
 Which dead thing all of its own foul hue still seeth.

373. Life's worn-out garment ne'er new again will be ;
 The world's course ne'er to thy heart's wish fain will be :
 Drink wine in the mug and quaff not the gugglet of care,
 For this gugglet the mug, when broken in twain, will be.¹

¹ Meaning, apparently, "Sorrows, when overcome, become joys."

374. Aught, in the good, of bad behoveth not to be ;
 Love of the wicked had behoveth not to be ;
 For care of substance sad behoveth not to be ;
 Conceit- and learning-mad behoveth not to be.

375. Lo, mock of the musk of Cathay thy tress maketh ;
 With thy lip the soul compact of friendliness maketh ;¹
 To the cypress thy shape I compared and thenceforward
 Still boast of the likeness the straight cypress maketh.

¹ i.e. "the soul cleaveth to, is inseparable from thy lip." *Roult*, soul
 (syn. breath), word here used for word-play with "lip."

376. Or ever with me the maw of the sepulchre fed becometh,
Or e'er in the dust each part of my frame forspread becometh,
O wine, from the tomb of the flagon once more thy head uplift !
Belike, yet alive my soul, with care that was dead, becometh.

377. We go and the age for us all undistressed abideth ;¹
Pierced, of an hundred pearls, scarce one, at best, abideth ;
A thousand fine conceits and thoughts an hundred thousand,
For the witlessness of the folk, each unexpressed abideth.

¹ i.e., is untroubled by, recketh nothing of our departure. ² The poet, at the approach of death, laments the stiffneckedness and folly of the folk, which have prevented him from giving to the world many high thoughts and jewels of meaning and exposition with which his soul was pregnant.

378. Wine, poured on a mountain, to dance its soul maketh ;
None but fools small account of the brimming bowl maketh :
Nay, how wilt thou have me leave winebibbing, seeing
That wine is a soul,¹ which the body whole maketh ?

¹ *Roull*, syn. spirit.

379. Our comrades all from hand are long ago become ;
Yea, in the track of doom, they're all laid low become :
One wine with us they drank at life its feast and drunk,
A turn or two ere we, they have, heigho ! become.¹

¹ Cf. Gilbert's " Au banquet de la vie, infortuné convive, j'apparus un jour et je meurs."

380. Yea, wine will I drink, whilst life still shall be mine,
 Though nought of earth's harvest save ill shall be mine :
 In this world I'll live merry, O soul of the world !¹
 Who knows if the next, will or nill, shall be mine ?

¹ Term of endearment, addressed to the cupbearer.

381. The dawn hath borne off the black standard of night ;
 Up, skinker ! bring wine of the Magians forthright !
 Ope those sleep-stained narcissi¹ of thine to the light ;
 Long enough shalt thou sleep, unaware of Time's flight.²

¹ "Narcissi," i.e. "eyes."
 by and by in the grave."

² i.e., "thou wilt have thy fill of sleep

382. Excuses, that passion for love of thee urges, full many
 there be ;
 In their mouths who are drunken with love of thee, dirges full
 many there be.
 What booteth thine eye thus to draw, for our slaughter, the sword
 of the glance,
 Since for us, wellaway ! in thine eyelashes scourges full many
 there be ?

383. Unto men, say they, worth and wit behoveth ;
 Unto high station lineage fit behoveth :
 But in our day all this for nothing passes ;
 Get thee but gold ; the rest no whit behoveth.

384. Live merry, for time still a-flying will be
 And souls after bodies still crying will be ;¹
 This cup of the skull, that with passion's a-brim,
 'Neath the foot of the potter soon lying will be.

¹ According to Mohammedan belief, the soul, when separated from the body by death, wanders about, seeking reincarnation, till the Resurrection, when bodies and souls are reunited for judgment.

385. With repentance's wede away, then, shall I make
 And to-wine-ward, at threescore and ten, shall I make !
 Now my head is all hoary, if merry I make not
 This moment, egad, merry *when* shall I make ?

386. One draught, for all my thirsting, my hand hath ne'er
 attained ;
 My foot on sure foundation to stand hath ne'er attained :
 My heart, with disappointment that's all forworn, in fine,
 One aim, of all the many it's planned, hath ne'er attained.

387. Idle repining and grieving, marry, what profit they ?
 Many like us the heaven bringeth and taketh away :
 Fill me the winecup and give it in hand, so drink I may ;
 Quick, for of mortal bodies wine is the life and stay.

388. When the plant of my life's uprooted and slain become
 And the parts of my frame forscattered must fain become,
 Of my clay if a gugglet ye fashion, it will forthright,
 With wine when ye fill it, alive again become.

389. Sheer asses yon prayer-carpet tenders¹ of ours are,
 A sort 'neath hypocrisy's burden that cowers are :
 And what's strangest of all, 'neath the mask of devotion,
 Though Islam they preach, yet they worse than the Giaours² are.

¹ i.e. pietists. ² Giaour (*Gaour*, pronounced *Jour*), the well-known Perso-Turkish word for "infidel," supposed to be a double corruption of Pers. *gahr* (fire-worshipper) and Arab. *kaafir*, unbeliever.

390. Live blithe, for the time, it is writ, shall e'en be
 When earth in earth hid, every whit, shall e'en be :
 Yea, drink nor take thought to the cark of the world :
 For the world let those care who in it shall e'en be !¹

¹ i.e., "let those who are yet to come care for the morrow."

391. Save the toper, eternity's secrets none knoweth ;
 The worth of the winecup no straitfist one knoweth :
 Strange my case though thou deem, yet, save drunkards, for sure,
 The case¹ of the drunkard no mother's son knoweth.

¹ *Hkal* ("case") *mystical* = ecstasy, i.e., the state of ecstatic objectivation to which it is the object of the theosophist and the toper to attain ; and this may be the sense in which the word is here used.

392. In the world's false allurements confide not, O fool, since,
 in fine,
 Of all its conditions and fashions full knowledge is thine :
 Beware lest thy life, that's so precious, thou give to the wind ;
 Haste, haste the belovèd to seek ! Haste, haste to drink wine !

393. Alas, that the *raw*¹ all the cooked food possess !
 That the incomplete only complete good possess !
 That the fair Turkish maids, with their heart-cheering eyes,
 Horsekeepers and lackeys, alas, should possess !

¹ *Klamam* (pl. of *klam*, raw), i.e., the rude vulgar, the canaille, *serrum pecus*, those who are incapable of conceiving an abstract idea, the *rohen Leute* of Schopenhauer.

394. O Thou, all transgression as nought in whose sight is,
 This point each maintains who a son of the light is :
 To make Wisdom Eternal the cause of transgression
 For the man of sound judgment delusion downright is.

395. O many's the age, when we're not and the world yet is,
 will be !
 When name neither trace of us left in men's memories will be !
 We were not whilere and no void in the universe there was,
 Nor yet, when no longer we are, hereafter, ywis, will be !

396. Yon nobles, endowed with high rank and condition,
 All weary of life are for care and contrition ;
 And yet, strange to say, as men only they reckon
 Those who, even as they, are the slaves of ambition.

397. Kheyyam, though of yon dome of heaven's celestial blue
 The tent's pitched and the door upon debate shut to,¹
 Like bubbles on the Cup of Being, into view
 Heaven's cupbearer hath brought a thousand such as you!²

¹ i.e., "though we are debarred from enquiry into the mysteries of creation, this thing at least is certain, i.e. that, etc." The word "tent" (*Kāchirā*) is introduced for the sake of word-play with *Kheyyam*, "tent-maker."

² A Vedantic metaphor.

398. Yon half a dozen dolts, who own the world and cry,
 For ignorance, "Behold, the world's know-all am I!"
 Cross not,¹ for all, who're not jackasses like themselves,
 They, of their self-conceit, for infidels decry.²

¹ Lit., "With yonder two [or] three ignoramuses, who possess the world," i.e. the ruling and governing classes, "[and who assert] for ignorance that they are the [all] knowing of the world. Be content," i.e., be on good terms with them, cross them not.

² i.e., since this world is in the hands of a knot of dunces, who think themselves Solomons, it behoveth the wise man to stand well with them and cross them not, for all who are not fools like themselves they deem infidels. • ("Make to yourselves friends of the Mammon of Unrighteousness.") A maxim of *Weltweisheit*, worthy of Baltasar Gracian.

399. Alack, for my heart to no salve for its care attained hath!
 My soul to the lip,¹ but not to the fair attained hath!
 Alas, for my life in ignorance come to an end is
 And the tale of her love to an ending ne'er attained hath!²

¹ i.e. "to the brink [of destruction]."
 of my love for her."

² i.e., "I have had no fruition

400. The day from myself an alien me that THEY make¹
 And a fable my life and my memory that THEY make,
 (Albeit the word I scarce dare venture to speak),²
 Please God of my clay a wine-mug it be that they³ make!

¹ i.e., "when the Fates sever my soul from my body, when I die."

² Lit. "Albeit this word I cannot say."

³ i.e. the folk.

401. Straitened my soul bytimes in the body's mesh becometh,
 Sick of the fellowship of this base flesh becometh:
 Life's gaol methinketh to break; but syne my foot, aright
 Turned by the stirrup of Law, on the stones afresh becometh.¹

¹ i.e., "I am often weary of life and would free myself therefrom by suicide, but for the restraint of the (spiritual) law." Suicide is not prohibited by the Koran, but Mohammed is said to have declared that those who kill themselves should suffer in the fires of hell.

402. Whiles turbid Life's wine is, whiles clear: at Fate's hest,
 Whiles in Yemeni stuffs,¹ whiles in sackcloth we're drest:
 A trifle's all this in the eyes of the sage:
 It behoveth us die; and what matters the rest?

¹ *Burd*, a fine striped stuff made in Yemen.

403. Beware lest thou burden thy body with travail and pain,
 That store of white silver and yellow gold thou may'st gain:
 Or ever thy live warm breath wax cold again,
 Eat thou with the Friend,¹ for the Foe² to eat *thee* will be fain.

¹ i.e. the beloved.

² i.e. death.

404. Whenas the violet its coat in colour clappeth ¹
 And the wind of the East its hand on the rose's collar clappeth, ²
 Sage is the man who wine with a silver-bosomed maid
 Drinks and the empty cup on the stones for dolour clappeth !

¹ i.e., dyeth, when it blossometh.
 Spring coaxes the rosebud into bloom.

² i.e., when the soft breezes of the

405. Thy clemency as we the devotee conceiveth not ;
 The stranger as the friend Thy quality conceiveth not :
 Say'st Thou, " If thou transgress, I 'll cast thee into Hell " ?
 Go, tell that unto him who Thee as we conceiveth not !

406. Each swallow of wine the world, near and far, well
 worth is ;
 A thousand dear lives the lid of the jar well worth is :
 The skirt-hem, wherewith the wine from the lips one wipeth,
 A thousand such wedes as the preacher's cymár ¹ well worth is.

¹ *Ditilesan*, a scarf worn hoodwise by preachers and professional savants.
 V. Dozy, " Dict. des Vêtements."

407. Those things which old are become and those which are
 new,
 Each in its turn its own goal tendeth unto :
 This worthless world with none for ever abideth ;
 Its things depart and others in turn ensue. ¹

¹ An undecipherable quatrain. The *Lucknow Commentator* glosses upon it with the following admirable piece of mystification, which should surely take a prize from the Commentators' Trade Union : " i.e., Death and Life, the love of both of them possesseth rare and wonderful ease and pleasance, such as eloquence and exposition cannot avail to define or describe by word or deed." To this one can but take off one's hat, as to something quite supreme of its kind.

408. The gugglet, lip to lip,¹ each sage would press, so he
 But lip to lip may join, in doing so, with thee:
 God grant that when I'm dead thy lip the gugglet's rim
 May press, which they shall mould from out the dust of me!

¹ *Lab-ber-lab*, syn. brimful; the word-play is evident.

409. Wit fails with age; awry with him that's old it tendeth;
 My cheek's pomegranate-flower mere paint¹ to hold it tendeth:
 What wonder if Life's house totter, since, all in ruin,
 Roof, door and cornerstones, to wrack and mould it tendeth?

¹ *Reng o abd*, lit. "somewhat of colour and water." *Ab-o-reng*, "water and colour," is a name of a face-paint (*rouge* or *blanc de perle*?), which is perhaps meant. The quatrain is apparently put in a girl's mouth.

410. If headache from yesternight's wine were not for me,
 Day-drinking, by choice of mine, were not for me:¹
 "Day-drinking," quotha, "then choose." By day the bliss
 Of seeing that face of thine² were not for me.

¹ Referring, apparently, to the necessity of curing crop-sickness with
 "a hair of the dog that bit me." ² To the beloved.

411. Those, in hypocrisy who the affair's foundation set,
 Come and 'twixt body and soul a separation set:
 My pitcher of wine I'll set aside as soon as they,
 Like to my jar, aside vociferation set.¹

¹ I.e., I am willing to leave off wine-drinking, but not till my enemies, the
 pietists, cease to worry me with their clamours.

412. The Ens Essentialis to know underneath it is ;
 A thing uncomprehended of all beneath it is :
 Thine eye with this pure liquor assain, until no more
 Indifferent to God's creatures,¹ as all it see'th, it is.

¹ i.e. "that which is other than mankind" (*Lock. Comm.*). A very obscure quatrain ; but the meaning is evidently the Vedantic doctrine of the identity of life in all things, the all-pervading One, the Self, in animals, plants and minerals as in human beings.

413. Fare not this way, for thence duality ariseth,
 Or, if not that, therefrom hypocrisy ariseth :
 Tread thou it not ; but, if thou strive amain, thou'lt come to
 A place where thouism, to go from thee, ariseth.¹

¹ i.e., "Fare not the way of pietism, for it leads to duality (i.e. the negation of Unity), or, at least, to hypocrisy ; but if thou persevere in the quest of the truth, thou wilt come at last to cast off the veil of delusion which leads thee to imagine that the world is other than thyself (*thouism*) and attain objectivation." This quatrain is not only Vedantic in spirit, but uses the absolute phraseology of the Upanishads: cf. the following extract from Gough's Upanishads, paragraph headed "Unity amidst the plurality of existence" :—
 "The scenes through which the sage finds himself migrating are manifold and varied and present themselves in a *duality* of experience—the *Subject* on one side, the *Object* on the other. The more he checks the senses and strives to gaze upon the inner light, where he sits seeking *ecstasy*, the more this plurality tends to fade away, *the more this duality tends to melt into an unity, A ONE AND ONLY BEING*. A thrill of awe runs through the Indian sage, as he finds that *this pure and characterless being, this light within the heart, in the light of which all things shine*," i.e., THE WORLD-SHOWING CUP OF JEMSHID (see ante, Quatrain 118), "*is the very SELF within him, freed from the flow of experiences by a rigorous effort of abstraction*. A perfect abstraction has enabled him to reach the last residue of all abstraction, the fountal essence, the inner light, the light beyond the darkness of the fleeting forms of conscious life."

414. The veil, in thy power and disposal that head and face maketh¹
 Short work evermore of thine enemy's whole case maketh :²
 As they say in the saw, " No Muslim's the flagon-maker :
 But praise him because he flagons with such a grace maketh." ³

¹ i.e., that enables thee to conceal and discover it at pleasure. ² Lit.
 " Continually doth all thine enemy's business," exactly in the modern slang
 sense of the phrase; a curious coincidence of two absolutely different idioms.
³ An obscure quatrain, meaning, apparently, that dissimulation is the best of
 weapons against an enemy.

415. The folk by the name of " Old o' the cloak " who designed
 are,
 Who a-stand in the street, with one or two loaves, still to find
 are,¹
 " Junéids are we all and Shibli's,"² quoth they; and for certain,
 By³ Marouf, they no saints, but rather of wild-beast-whelp kind
 are.⁴

¹ i.e. the begging dervishes. ² Juneid, Abou Bekr es Shibli and
 Marouf Kerkhi were celebrated Baghdadi ascetics of the ninth and tenth
 centuries. ³ *Der*, i.e. " compared with." ⁴ The point of the
 quatrain lies in the fact that " Shibli " means also " wild-beast-whelp-like."

416. He is no man, to my thought, whom the folk hold in scorn¹
 and despise
 And natheless repute him good for fear of his unright :
 A toper with generous men who useth back-handedness²
 Topers all hold him a hand-back, to wit, a catamite.³

¹ *Rouï-desti*, i.e. deceit, craft.

² An unintelligible quatrain.

417. A sword in any's hand is answer meet for me ;
 Withal on every point is sure defeat for me :
 My foeman's rotten heart as 't were roast meat for me,
 Ay, and his empty skull is goblet feat for me.¹

¹ A ferocious quatrain, which is certainly spurious.

418. O wine, the lip of ruby of the friend still bear in hand,
 Since that this thing thou holdest so bright and rare in hand !
 From tulip-wine this parting, O cup, good luck account,
 Since with heart's blood it bringeth the lip of the fair in hand.¹

¹ An "amorous conceit." The poet enjoins wine to keep bold of the beloved's lip, when set thereto, and exhorts the cup to rejoice at being obliged to give up its wine to her drinking, since it gets her lip and the lover's heart's blood in exchange.

419. With a churl that lacks wit and good-breeding beware
 Lest thou drink, or annoy for thyself thou 'lt prepare ;
 Thou his brawling and riot, the night of liesse,
 And next day, his repentance¹ and headache must bear.

¹ Lit. "excuse-asking," i.e. of God.

420. Since there's no fleeing from that which the stars decree,
 Beware lest thou weary thyself after vanity ;
 Nor lay on thy heart a burden too great for thee,
 For "leaving and losing" the end of it all must be.¹

¹ i.e., when death comes, one must leave all and go.

421. A mouthful of wine than Jemshid's throne is better ;
 Than Meryem's food,¹ its odour alone is better :
 Than Edhem's Laments² and the Songs of Abou Saïd,³
 In the hour of the dawn, the winebibber's moan is better.

¹ The Muslims fable the Virgin Mary (*Meryem*) to have been supplied with special food from heaven during her youth (v. Koran, iii, 32) and also to have been fed by the Angel Gabriel with dates after her delivery (v. Koran, xix, 25).

² The Lamentations of Ibrahim el Edhem, a king of Balkh in the ninth century, who renounced his crown and became a wandering dervish. ³ The quatrains of Abou Saïd ibn Aboulkheir, a Soufi poet of the eleventh century. Several of the quatrains published under Kheyyam's name are attributed to him ; but, as the Arabs say, " God alone is all-knowing ! "

422. The heavens to us add but despite evermore ;
 Nought they plant, but they rase it forthright evermore :
 Th' unborn, if they knew what we suffer from Fate,
 Would refuse to come forth to the light evermore.

423. Of existence, O friend, why abide thus in care ?
 With idle thought-taking thy spirit why wear ?
 Live merry and let the world slide ; for the Fates
 Take no counsel with thee of the end of th' affair.

424. Thy portion of Fortune, its storm and its shine, take ;
 On the couch of mirth sit and the full cup of wine take :
 Of obedience God recketh nor yet of transgression :
 Thy desire of the world and thy pleasance, in fine, take.

425. 'T is the hour of the dawning ; up, flower of thy kind !
 With rubies in crystal come gladden our mind ;
 For this moment we borrow from Time on the wing
 Full oft wilt thou seek nor again wilt thou find.

426. Yon ruby aflow in the crystal pure do thou bring ;
 The free man's familiar and solace sure do thou bring :
 Yea, wine,—since thou knowest the days of the world are wind
 That fleeteth amain and will not endure,—do thou bring.

427. Since at peace with the Friend thou hast been all thy life,
 As a dream, that is dreamed, thou hast seen all thy life :
 True, in fine, thou must die ; but the world's chief delight
 'T will have yet been vouchsafed thee to glean all thy life.

428. If thy cheek be the idol, idolatry's goodlier ;
 When wine's of thy skinking, then drunk to be's goodlier :
 Love-drunken I'll be, for its drunkenness still
 Than a thousand existences unto me's goodlier.

429. Wit and worth, Sphere of Heaven, thou lackest, 't is clear ;
 To slaughter the noble thou thinkest no fear ;
 Earth's treasures thou giv'st to the base, far and near :
 Good luck with thee go, for a love-fost'ring¹ Sphere !

¹ Ironical.

430. With her I love, the cup of wine for me is better;
 The tearful eye, when gone from sight is she, is better:
 Since this base world of ours will never faith be keeping,
 In this base world for aye dead-drunk to be is better.

431. In the compass of Heaven, the deep, the unkenned,
 Is a cup¹ which to all men in turn THEY commend:
 When it comes to thy turn, drink and make no complaint,
 For this is a cup all must drain in the end.

¹ I.e. the cup of death.

432. Since the lot of a man in this world of change (the wise
 man saith)
 Is nothing but grief of heart and surrender of life to death,
 Happy, thrice happy he that was never of mother born
 And happy, thrice happy those that never yet drew breath!

433. The canon heed not nor the rules¹ of observance Divine;
 Beset not thy fellows with slander or evil design
 And grudge not to any the morsel to give that is thine:
 On these terms I warrant thee heaven; and meanwhile bring wine.

¹ Var.: "the strict obligation perform."

434. A potter I saw in the market yesterday
 With many a buffet belabour a lump of clay,
 The which, with the tongue of the case, "Thy like I've been;
 Have some regard for me, prithee!" to him did say.

435. Yon folk of the tombs are dwindled to dust and clay ;
 Each atom of them from atom hath fallen away ;
 Oh, what is this potion ¹ whereof having drunken, they
 Are senseless and witless become till the Reckoning Day ? ²

¹ I.e. the draught of death. ² Var. of lines 2, 3 and 4 : " Unwitting
 of all things and selfless become are they : Each atom, indeed, since from
 atom it falleth away, What a mirage, alack ! is this that's a-work to-day ! "
 I.e., what a vain show is this of life !

436. Thine every wish of the world e'en won suppose ;
 This life forpast and the term outrun suppose ;
 " A hand," say'st thou, " I 'll clap on my heart's desire " ?
 Thou canst not ; or, if thou canst, it done suppose. ¹

¹ I.e., in the hour of death, what doth it profit us to have had our desire of
 the world ?

437. HIM whoso would find, from wife and child must he sever ;
 From the bondage of self himself must he manfully sever :
 To thee, in the Way, ¹ all things that exist are a hindrance ;
 Who a journey will fare himself from all bondage frees ever.

¹ I.e., *mystic*, the career of the seeker after union with the Divine Essence,
 the undifferentenced Self of the Vedas.

438. Thy head upraised to the height of sway suppose ;
 Earth's good enjoyed to the full to-day suppose ;
 Of gold and jewels whatever thy heart can wish
 Suppose possessed and passed away suppose.

439. Wine, if thou needs must drink, with men of sense and
wit drink,

Or fair ones, tulip-cheeked and lips with laughter lit, drink :

Drink seldom ; tell it not and make no practice of it ;

In season nor o'ermuch and still in secret it drink.

440. All the world, end to end, unto gold willed¹ suppose ;

Hundred treasuries money-and-gem-filled suppose ;

In fine, all these treasures, like snow on the wold,

Three days lain, then to nothing forspilled, suppose.

¹ i.e. "changed by the power of the will to gold."

441. O soul, of the unmixed wine, in the rose-time rare, drink
thou ;

To the name and the health of the heart-alluring fair drink thou :

Wine is the blood of the vine, and the vine saith to thee,

"My blood to thee lawful I've made" ; so without spare drink
thou.

442. Though thy life a thousand years and a thousand thousand
were,

Forth of this old world-house, in fine, THEY will thee bear :

Whether a Sultan thou be or a beggar of the bazaar,

Both at the same price stand in the end of the affair.

443. O heart, at thy will all the world hath of worth suppose ;

With verdure adorned thy garden of mirth suppose

And thyself on that green, like dew, for a night set down,

And again on the morrow uprisen from earth, suppose.

444. O friend, the chagrin of this world, the obscene, eat thou not;
 This worn-out old world's unavailing chagrin eat thou not:
 When existence is past, non-existence existent¹ is not:
 Bide blithe; the chagrin of yon world the unbeen² eat thou not.

¹ Lit. "apparent"; but the meaning is as given—i.e., with the cessation of existence, non-existence also disappears. ² i.e. the next world.

445. If aught of sense, O doctor, O casuist, thou possess,
 Look not on men of wit with all this jealousness:
 They all of the Creator and His creation speak;
 Thou of the menstrual blood and other nastiness.¹

¹ Alluding to the questions of ceremonial uncleanness, which play so important a part in Semitic theology.

446. Through the shifts of this time, the base-fostering, aye
 In an hundred chagrins my life passeth away;
 Like the rosebud, heart-cramped,¹ in the rose-bed of life;
 Like the tulip, heart-scarred,² in the garth of the day.

¹ Alluding to the tightly-rolled petals of the rose in bud. ² Alluding to the black marks at the base of the corolla of the common tulip, which are likened by Persian poets to scars or bloodstains at the heart.

447. Wine to drink, in the season of youth, it is best;
 With the fair to quaff wine, pure and sooth, it is best:
 Since the world erst by water was ruined, with wine
 Drunk and ruined¹ to be, here, in truth, it is best.

¹ i.e. dead-drunk (*mast o kherab*). See previous notes.

448. O Thou, in whose quest the whole world is astir, in whose
sight
Men, dervish and noble alike, are all naked outright,
With all men Thou speakest, but deaf is the ear of each wight;
With all Thou art present, but blind is each eye to Thy light!

449. Rosy wine, when the rose is a-bloom in the mead, do thou
quaff;
To the clang of the harp and the wail of the reed, do thou quaff:
Glad of heart, I make merry with wine; but to drink if *thou* scorn,
Marry, what shall I bid thee save "Stones, then," indeed, "do
thou quaff."¹

¹ "Quaff," lit. "eat" throughout. The Persians speak of "eating" (not "drinking") wine, etc. "To eat stones" = "to be stoned"; but, in passages of this kind, it means "go to the devil!"

450. Strait at heart an thou be, of bang but a grain swallow;
Or of rose-coloured wine a pottle or twain swallow:
Since Soufi thou'rt turned, of *this* thing thou eat'st not and *that*;
For thine eating are stones; so stones must thou fain swallow.¹

¹ I.e. "go to the devil!" See note to last quatrain. In both cases (as in following quatrain), it is an "admonisher" who is addressed.

451. Wine to the cheek of the slim heart-ravishing fair quaff thou!
The antidote, an thou be stung of the asp of despair, quaff thou!
I drink and make merry; much good may it do me! If *thou*
drink not,
Nay, what shall I do? Go; dust, for aught that I care, quaff thou!¹

¹ "To drink (lit. "eat") dust" is a variant of the expression "to eat stones" and has the same meaning, as well as that of "to die, perish."

452. Quoth my heart to me: "Lore from on high desirable,
I trow, is;

Teach me, I pray, if to thee vouchsafed indeed to know is."

Quoth I: "Nay, the *Elif*¹ sufficeth thee; seek thou no more:
When the man of the house² is at home, forsooth, one letter
eno' is."³

¹ *Elif*, the first letter of the Arabic alphabet.

² *Ker*, "the person."

³ An enigmatical quatrain, meaning, apparently, that the knowledge of the Unity (the Vedantic Undifferented Self), the "Alpha and Omega," compriseth all wisdom.

453. Arise and give wine! What room for prate, in fine, is?

To-night thy strait¹ mouth the food of this soul of mine is:

Yea, give thou us wine as the rose of thy cheek in colour,

For our fortune² as full of breach³ as that tress of thine is.

¹ *Teng*, "narrow," i.e. "small"; word used for sake of allusion to "straitness" of subsistence.

² *Nouber*, lit. "turn, time," here = "worldly lot."

³ *Shiten*, syn. "curl," also "deceit," "severity," "moroseness"; i.e., fortune is unfavourable to me; word used for sake of word-play with "tress."

454. Now the world for the Spring once more apt to delight is,

To the meads each one's heart turns that livesome of spright is:

Each tree-bough with blossom as Moses' hand¹ white is;

Each breath a new Jesus-breathed one² come to light is.

¹ i.e. sweet-scented flower. See ante, No. 276.

455. This thy being the being, when scanned, of Another is;

This thy drunkenness¹ that, understand, of Another is:

Go, draw thy head in to the collar of thought;² for

Thy hand but the sleeve³ of the hand of Another is.⁴

¹ *Atati*, here app. = passion.

² *Id.* = bethink thee.

³ i.e. "cover, veil"; word "sleeve" used for sake of word-play with "collar" and "hand."

⁴ A mystic quatrain, meaning that Man is but the mask and puppet of the Oversoul.

456. Alack, my old head in the toils hath the love of thee ta'en !
 Else how come my hand and the winecup together again ?
 That repentance which reason vouchsafed the beloved one broke
 And the wede that was woven of patience the Days ¹ rent in twain.

¹ i.e. Fortune or Time.

457. The Sphere from the clouds, see, eglantine poureth down ;
 Very blossoms, thou'dst say, it on the green poureth down :
 In the lily-like cup the rose-coloured wine will I pour,
 From the violet clouds since jessamine poureth down.¹

¹ A description of the Spring rains.

458. Ramazan-time is gone at last and see, Shewwál cometh !
 The season of pleasance and song and festival cometh !
 The time is at hand once more when, with water-skin ¹ shouldered,
 They cry out " Aid ! aid ! " ² The carrier (make way all !) cometh ! "

¹ *Kalk*, water-skin or leathern water-bottle. Mr. Whinfield unaccountably renders *kalk* "wine-skin," as if the hawking of wine would be allowed in a Mohammedan country ! In Ramazan-time, when it is not allowable to break the fast even with a draught of water (the strict Muslim, indeed, considers the swallowing of the saliva a breach of the canon), the usual water-carrying service is suspended, at all events during the day, and is not resumed till the Festival. ² *Pusht / pusht* / lit. "the back ! the back !" met. = "aid, protection"; evidently the Persian water-carrier's cry. Cf. the cry, "aid ! " (*meded* /) of the Cairene lupin-seller and that ("God aid or recompense ! ") of the Egyptian water-carrier. (See Lane's "Modern Egyptians.") It is also possible that the cry is simply the name of Pusht, an outlying suburb of Nishapour, of which the water-carriers who supplied the city were perhaps natives, it being quite in consonance with Oriental usage for certain trades to be monopolized by the inhabitants of certain districts.

459. Companions, when merry in concord anew ye make,
Of the Friend look remembrance and mention due ye make !
Whilst together in mirth ye drink the delectable wine,
When it comes to my turn, the cup upside-down do ye make !¹

¹ As a token of memory and mourning for the dead friend, i.e. himself.

460. All that kindness thou showedst me yesterday, what was it ?
And that holding me easeful and blithe and gay, what was it ?
Now for nought but the vexing my heart and my spright thou
strivest !

Nay, what wrong have I done thee ? Again, I say, what was it ?¹

¹ App. a complaint of the beloved's capriciousness.

461. The pearl of obedience to Thee though bored have I ne'er,¹
Though the dust of the mosque with my cheek swept, Lord, have
I ne'er,

From the throne of Thy clemency yet I despair not of grace,
Since with any duplicity² used, deed or word, have I ne'er.

¹ I.e., I have been no observer of religious obligations. ² Lit. "to any one (yokh) I have never said two": the meaning may be that "I never denied the unity of God, never ascribed partners to Him," i.e. "never denied the fundamental dogma of Mohammedanism"; or (more probably) "I never traversed the great Vedantic dogma, 'This is That' (or 'That art Thou')," i.e., all things (human and otherwise) are informed by the same soul and are therefore One and the same, "and never doubted that the Self is at once both subject and object." Personally, I incline to the reading I have given in the text.

462. Of all who the long, long road¹ have travelled to this day,
Where is there one come back the tale to us to say?
Of hope and of longing, then, at the end of this double way,²
Look thou leave nought behind, for *there*³ thou'lt sojourn aye.

¹ That of death. ² I.e. the junction of the roads of Life and Death.
³ I.e. in the other world.

463. Go, on the earth and the heavens cast dust¹ and all their
care;
Drink wine and follow the trace of the pleasant-visaged fair.
Where is the good of obedience? Where is the profit of prayer?
Of all that have gone before us, there's none returneth e'er.

¹ I.e., snap thy fingers at them.

464. Yon Sphere, which its myst'ries to none doth explain,
Many a Mahmoud¹ and Ajax² by violence hath slain:
Drink, drink, for to no one life twice doth it give;
None the world that departeth returneth again.

¹ I.e. of Ghazneh. See note to Q. 193. ² Ajax, his favourite.

465. In the tavern *with* Thee better secrets to say
Than *without* Thee it were in the prayer-niche to pray.¹
O Thou, of all creatures the First and the Last,²
At Thy pleasure, caress or consume me away!³

¹ I.e., communication with the Divine Essence in the tavern in secret is better than a vain show of worship in public. ² I.e., in whom all
beginneth and endeth: "I am Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last"
(Rev. xxii, 13). ³ I.e., "Lord, not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

466. I slept in the covert of Nothingness: quoth Thou, "Up!
Hold!"¹

In this world full of fever abide thou removed and cold?"²

When now Thy command I consider, bewildered am I;

'Tis as if one "Awry hold the pitcher and spill not!"³ were told.

¹ *Khis dar*, a child's game, something like blindman's buff, in which "Up! Hold!" or "Up! Catch!" is said to the blindfold player, as he sits on the ground in the midst of a circle formed by the others. ² Lit. "in the world far from the world," *dour-i-jahan* for *dour az jahan*, "the tumult-, trouble-, or fever-exciting"; a corrupt passage, the meaning of which can be only gathered from the context. ³ A proverbial expression implying a contradiction in terms.

467. I'm a falcon that forth from the World of the Secret¹ did fly,
So to Thee I might wing; but, alack! Thou still settledst on high.²
Since here not a confidant worthy the secret found I,
I must e'en get me forth at the door that I entered by.³

¹ I.e. the world of the invisible, the spiritual world. ² I.e. out of my reach. ³ The soul speaks. The "Thou" that eluded its grasp is the Divine Entity, the Oversoul.

468. O heart, since the world of a truth is illusion in vain,
Why, then, for its sake this longsome chagrin entertain?
Submit thee to Fate and suffer without complain,
For the Pen¹ for thy sake on its Writ will not go back again.

¹ I.e. that of Foreordination.

469. 'Tis morning ; up, O fount of amorous grace !
 Let the harp resound and the winecup flow apace !
 For those who yet stand will not bide long in place
 And those who are gone will ne'er their steps retrace.

470. Lo, day and night we're fallen in travail and duresse ;
 Now hither and now thither, now up, now down, we press ;
 Nor aught our travel yieldeth save ever new distress,
 Nought but the Long Way leaveth, that leads to nothingness.

471. Up, man of sense and wit, thou keen of sight and wise,
 Say to yon child of clay¹: "Unhappy one, arise !
 Lo, of thy heedlessness, thou tramplest under foot
 The brain of Kei-Kobad and Khosrou Perwiz'² eyes ! "

¹ App. the much-objurgated potter.

² Two early kings of Persia.

472. Love-drunken and rapture-possessed we to-day are ;
 In the idols' ¹ street toppers profest we to-day are ;
 From existence and self altogether delivered,
 In the prayer-niche, sans cease, of A-LEST we to-day are.²

¹ I.e. the fair. In Persia, as in other Oriental countries, the "light o' loves" have a special street or quarter to themselves. ² I.e., "we are absorbed in ecstatic contemplation of the mysteries of Infinity." *A-lest* is a proverbial synonym of *Azel*, Eternity-without-beginning, hence the Day of Creation ; because God is fabled by the Muslims (see Koran, vii, 171) to have, on the First Day, said to the (as yet unincarnated) souls, "Am I not your Lord ?" (*A-lest-u bi-rabbi-kum*), and they are said to have answered, "Yes."

473. To the usance of toping return have we made;
 Over prayer the Tekbîr of renouncement we've said;¹
 Our necks cupward craned, like the gugglet, thou'lt see
 Wherever the banquet of wine is arrayed.²

¹ I.e., we have forsworn it. The *Tekbîr* is the formula *Allah Akbar* (God is greatest!) preliminary to prayer, after pronouncing which, the worshipper must do or think of nothing profane till he has completed his prayer. In like manner, Khayyam and his companions have "sworn off" from everything but winebibbing; an ingenious perversion of the meaning of the religious ordinance, which reminds me of the remark of a philosophic cabman, whom I once saw detained, by stoppage of traffic, on the skirts of a Salvation Army procession (upon the occasion of the return of "General" Booth from India) and listening, with unspeakable disgust, to the anti-alcoholic outpourings of a gentleman of the Boothian persuasion, himself apparently far gone in liquor, who was exhorting the neighbouring loafers to "keep clear of the booze, boys!"; to which quoth the cabman (mistaking, I fear wilfully, the singular "booze" for the plural of the sacred individuality of the great Apostle of Redemption by Riot), "Yes, you bet we'll keep clear on 'em; they don't get none of *our* dibs."

² Apparently a quatrain of Ramazan-end.

474. When once thou'rt no more, nor sleep neither food wilt
 thou need;
 Yon yokefellows four¹ will make thee a beggar indeed:
 Each one from thee all that it gave to take back will proceed,
 Till thou be as thou wast at the first, before donning Life's wede.

¹ "I.e. the Four Elements."—*Luck. Comm.*

475. The belov'd (may her life be as long as my dismay!)
 To kindlier dealing with me reverted to-day;
 On my eye wet with weeping she glanced and went her way,
 As who "Cast your bread on the waters!" indeed should say.¹

¹ Lit., "Do a good [action] and cast [it] in the water"; a proverbial saying exactly equivalent to ours. The water alluded to is the tear-brimmed eye of the lover.

476. On the face of the rose the cloud-veil fine, yet is it;
 In the core of my heart inclination for wine, yet is it:
 Nay, go not to sleep: Sleep's season, soul mine, yet is it?
 Marry, come drink; for the sun full ashine, yet is it.

477. With the wise and the noble thy dealings still be;
 A thousand leagues far from the good-for-nought flee:
 If the wise give thee poison, still drink without fear,
 And triacle¹ reject, if churls proffer it thee.

¹ See note to Quatrain 219.

478. Lord, Thou hast decked and graced that love-exciting fair
 With hyacinthine curls of amber-scented hair
 And then forbadst us look on her! This Thy behest
 Is as if "Hold awry ~~nor~~ spill!"¹ commanded were.

¹ See note to Q. 466.

479. That abstention from her should impossible be
 God decreed and then bade us, forsooth, from her flee!
 'Twixt command and forbiddal, egad, we're perplexed;
 "Hold awry and spill not!" as if bidden were we.

480. We're the pieces Heaven moves on the chessboard of space
 (No metaphor this, but the truth of the case);
 Each awhile on Life's board plays his game and returns
 In the box of nonentity back to his place.

481. They're gone and of those once departed, none cometh
back e'er,

The myst'ry behind the dark curtain to thee to declare :
Not in prayer, but abasement the key is of this thine affair ;¹
Abasement without and sincereness, mere child's play² is prayer.

¹ i.e., by humble supplication (*niyas*), not by the mere formal act of prayer or worship, will thy need be resolved. Cf. Herbert's "A broken heart is my best part."
² *Basichet*.

482. To the lip of the winepot my lip in hot longing I set,
So the secret of life long-enduring therefrom I might get :
By the tongue of the case it bespoke me with, "Do not forget
Like thee I lived once ; for a moment, then, bear with me yet."¹

¹ i.e., "use me gently." Var. of last two lines : "It privily whispered to me, as its lips and mine met, 'Thou wilt never come back to the world ; so to drink not forget.'"

483. O thou¹ who all sovereigns and princes surpassest in might,
Know'st thou on what days wine to tipple enkindleth the spright ?
On Sundays and Mondays and Tuesdays and Wednesdays, no less ;
On Thursdays and Fridays and Saturdays, morn and night.²

¹ Addressed to the cupbearer, as conquering all with her beauty.
² Cf. O. E. glee, "Which is the properest day to drink ?"

484. This illusory moment,¹ what is't ? ask'st thou me ?
Nay, to tell the whole truth a long story would be.
From a sea 't is a moment² apparent become
And next moment gone back to th' abyss of the sea.

¹ *Ngfi*, syn. "breath, soul" ; i.e. Life, the World-Illusion, the MAYA of the Vedas.
² Var. *narsā*, "picture, image." The "sea" is xonentity.

485. Since from thy life a portion pare off still night and day,
 Let not thy life for sorrow lie sterile night and day:
 Thy day and night in joyance pass, for, when long ago
 No more thou art, each other succeed will night and day.

486. O ogling, coquettish, light-minded, inconstant fair maid,
 Sit and thousands of troubles at rest by thy session be laid !
 Thou biddest me look not upon thee ; alack ! this command
 Is as if " Hold the pitcher awry and spill not " it were said.

487. Alas that the hand¹ still to travail and stress doth tend !
 That with thee it the road of going to the wind² doth wend !³
 Forasmuch as, indeed, its inward to bone inclines,
 Its portion the teeth of the rake will be in the end.⁴

¹ *Cheng*, syn. harp. ² i.e. destruction. ³ *Hemras* ("confidant"), the rhyme-word, seems to be put here merely for the rhyme's sake, instead of *hemrah*, way-mate, fellow-traveller, which is evidently meant. ⁴ A very obscure quatrain, which apparently means that the hand still wearieith itself with fume and fret and leadeth its way-mate, the soul, with it to destruction. "The teeth of the rake," *semble*, in allusion to the appearance of the hand, when reduced to a skeleton.

488. Thou that knowest the innermost soul of all that be,
 Thou, the Helper in anguish and dole of all that be,
 Vouchsafe me repentance, O Lord, and accept my excuse,
 O Thou Bett'rer and Pardoner sole of all that be !

489. That yon golden bowl of the sun should double be made
 And this ruinous world on a sure foundation laid,
 Are thoughts that were ne'er by the touchstone of science assayed,
 Ideas were ne'er in the scales of the intellect weighed !¹

¹ i.e., "one is as inconceivable as the other."

490. Of the things of the time to come forecast ask not ;
 Of aught that betides, since it will not last, ask not :
 This moment in hand consider thou gain nor reck
 Of that which shall be ; and of that which is past ask not.

491. Vile Sphere, thou the base, that the base ne'er forsakest,
 Never step to the heart's wish of any thou takest !
 O Sphere, this thine usance and rule thou ne'er breakest,
 That the no-ones some-ones, some-ones no-ones thou makest !¹

¹ i.e., Fortune still exalts the base and abases the worthy.

492. A bird on the walls of Tous seated I saw whilere,
 By the skull of Keikawous, that lay abandoned there ;
 "Alas !" to the skull quoth she ; "alas, the days that were !
 Where is the noise of the bells and the clang of the tymbals,
 where ?"

493. Kheyyam, if drunken with wine thou art, be blithe ;
 With a tulip-cheeked fair if recline thou art, be blithe :
 Since the issue of all things is death, imagine, whilst yet
 Thou livest, that dead, by this sign, thou art ; be blithe.

494. How long thus the ign'rance expose in me that I feel
 Strait's my heart for the doubt and perplexity that I feel.
 If the Magians' girdle I bind on my middle,¹ it is
 For the shame of my Musulmanhood, perdie, that I feel.²

¹ i.e., if I am a toper, tavern-haunter. ² i.e. app., because I feel that Mohammedanism affords no adequate solution of the problems of existence. "Because I feel myself so poor a Musulman," does not seem an adequate explanation.

495. There's a cup¹ that a-shape Creative Reason setteth it,
 And kisses of love on its front, great foison, setteth It:
 But yon Potter of Time, if a goodly cup It fashion,
 Still crash on the ground all out of season setteth it.²

¹ i.e. the human head. ² *Zmes-ek* ("setteth it"), syn, "clappeth" or "dasheth it," throughout. A complaint of the uncereemonious treatment by Time of Creation's masterpiece.

496. No care for the coming time make pale the cheek of thee!
 Nor thought of the past the gall make water-weak of thee!
 Thy portion of this base world I rede thee take in haste,
 Or ever unsparing Time its mischief wreak of thee.

497. Draughts of bright wine, with a smooth-cheeked fair, draw
 thou;
 The heart's skirt in from the enemy, care, draw thou:
 With a fair-faced friend come sit and forget thyself;
 The wede of self-consciousness off for e'er draw thou.

498. With the counsels of every-day prudence, O heart, dispense ;
 Thyself, like to Him, abstract from this world of sense :
 At the feast of the Devotees of Meaning¹ sit ;
 Fare free and drink wine ; live happy, ere thou go hence.

¹ Lit. "the Calenders of meaning"; i.e., the servants of the Ideal, those who pursue the quest of things spiritual with the same devotion as is shown by the Calenders (an order of Mohammedan mendicant fanatics, who bear a very bad reputation) in the pursuit of things religious.

499. Seek salve not from others, O heart, for this dole of thine ;
 Bide blithe, 'spite the pain of this sorrowful soul of thine ;¹
 Sit lonely and thy chagrin thyself devour ;
 Ask ease of yon bosom-friend (the bowl) of thine.

¹ "Better suffer one's pain alone and in silence than lay oneself under obligation to others for relief."—*Luck. Comm.*

500. Wine for e'er, its forbiddal despite, do thou drink ;
 With harping and song, day and night, do thou drink :
 Whilst a cup of red wine is vouchsafed thee of Fate,
 Spill no drop, but the whole of it quite do thou drink.

501. As last night, flushed with wine, by the tavern I hied,
 Drunk and pitcher a-back, an old man I espied :
 "Ho, gaffer !" quoth I, "hast no shame before God ?"
 "God the Bountiful is ; go, drink wine !" he replied.

502. Youth is gone, horse and foot, and this body of mine
 Like the arc is become, that was once as the sine :
 Life is bitter to me and its essence is wine ;¹
 Wine and women adieu have I bidden, in fine.

¹ i.e., even wine, which is bitter, as being the quintessence of bitter life, is grown unplesing to me.

503. Yon Water of Life (blessed Khizr the guard doth aby of it)
 Is none other than wine and the prophet Elias am I of it ;
 Nay, the food of the heart and the food of the spirit I call it,
 Since "Therein for mankind," God hath said, "great advantages
 lie," of it.¹

¹ "Therein," i.e. in wine, "is great sin and advantages for mankind."
 —Koran, li, 216.

504. Sly Love, at unawares, off guard hath taken me ;
 "Since I am come, begone !· Get out of this !" ¹ quoth he.
 In fine, for his chagrin, my heart is so ablaze
 That all the fuel fire, fire fuel's come to be !²

¹ i.e., "Become thou beside (Pers. id. "without, outside") thyself," i.e. distraught for love. ² i.e., "my heart is in such a blaze that there is no telling which is heart and which fire."

505. O Fortune, spare to tempt me with thy delusive bait ;
 Consider thine abjection and my august estate :
 On Love's chagrin and poortith I've battened ear and late
 Till weary without ending I am of life ingrate.

506. How long wilt fret thyself for that which is in store ?
 Chagrin the portion is of him who looks before :
 Bide blithe nor on thy heart make strait the world ; for sure
 Our lot for taking thought becometh less nor more.

507. Thee a counsel I'll give, an if thou wilt hearken to me :
 For God's sake, don not the wede of hypocrisy :
 This life 's but a breath and the next life for ever will be :
 Sell not for a breath the realm of eternity.

508. My merits note, one by one ; my faults, by the score, forgive ;
 For the love of God, each sin, that was sinned heretofore, forgive !
 The fire of despite with the wind of passion enkindle not ;
 By the dust of the Prophet, our sins, I say once more, forgive !

509. Last night, in the shop of a potter I was, and there
 An hundred score pots, all voiceful, though silent, were :
 Each one, with the tongue of the case, to us did say,
 "Where's the maker of pots and the buyer and seller, where?"¹

¹ "i.e., Maker and seller and buyer are all alike subject to annihilation and takers of the road of non-existence."—*Luck Comm.* But the more probable meaning is the Vedantic dogma of Unity, "This is That."

510. Until to the boil comes this pot of existence of mine,
 In the cup of contentment I'll tipple the juice of the vine.
 O potter, if gugglets thou make, when I'm sped, of my clay,
 Be sure that thou sell them to none but the vendors of wine.

511. Of this wine, for that Life Everlasting, in truth, it is, drink !
 The fount and the source of the pleasance of youth it is ; drink !
 True, it burneth like fire ; but, withal, in atonement thereof,
 Like the Water of Life, grief-allaying and sooth it is: Drink !

512. Creeds threescore and twelve, more or less, among men are
 confest ;

Thy love over all these I hold to be goodliest and best.
 What reck I of Faith or Unfaith, of obedience or sin ?
 Thou, Thou art the aim of desire and a fig for the rest !

513. Wine, in the goblet clear that a subtle spright, to wit, is,
 In the body of the flask a fluid bright, to wit, is :
 A comrade meet for me no heavy wight, to wit, is,
 Save it the winecup be, that heavy-light, to wit, is.¹

¹ A conceit worthy of Gongora or the Cavalier Marino. The meaning is that "no dull, stupid (*geran*, syn. "heavy") person will I associate with, except the winecup, which is at once full (*geran*, syn. "heavy") and pleasant or subtle (*ladiif*, syn. "light")," the quatrain thus turning entirely on the different meanings of the words *geran* and *ladiif*.

514. Kheyyam, Fortune looks upon those with disdain
 For the cark of the days who straithearted remain :
 Drink wine from the flask, to the ghittern's soft strain,
 Ere the flagon of life on death's stones break in twain.

515. See, the day daws and the skirt of the night is rent !
 Up, up, drink the draught of the morning ! Why all this lament ?
 Quick, sweetheart, for many a morning yet will dawn,
 Its face upon us and ours to the earthward bent.

516. The face, that is wholly pure from soil and fray,
 Was ever but newly come in this world of clay :
 Give wine, then, O thou with the morning-draught that mat'st,¹
 Or ever " God prosper thine eventide ! " ² they say.

¹ i.e. the cupbearer.

² The formula of prayer for the dead.

517. O many's the vestment of being the heavens each night
 Knit up and presently rend it in sunder outright !
 O many's the glad thing and sad thing that Time to light
 Still daily bringeth and beareth away from sight !

518. If Heav'n peace deny, for war, be it known, here goes !
 If good name be not ours, for shame, then, alone, here goes !
 For the cup of right wine, like the Redbud full-blown, here goes !
 And whoso drinks not, for his head and a stone here goes !

519. Wheel of Fortune, the bond nor of bread nor of salt dost
 thou know ; ¹
 Lo, bare as a fish still thou hold'st me for poortith and woe :
 The wheel of the spinster both spinner and buyer doth clothe ;
 The wheel of the spinster is better than thine, I trow.

¹ i.e., thou art bound by no laws of honour or good faith.

520. How long wilt thou thus oppress me, sphere of the skies?
 For God's sake, do thou thy smiting on gentler wise!
 I'm all afire for affliction and still thy hand
 My burning bosom with salt each moment plies.

521. Of the fire of the future afear'd thou 'st never been;
 The tide of repentance hath never washed thee clean:
 When the storm-blast of destiny douteth the lamp of thy life,
 I fear me the earth will disdain to take thee in.¹

¹ In anticipation of which consummation, the reader will remember that Kheyyam had already (see ante, Quatrain 352) provided that his clay, instead of being buried, should be made into bricks and used to stop holes in the tavern wall.

522. If the rose be denied, for the thorn here goes!
 For the dark, if the light be forborne, here goes!
 If patchgown nor prayer-rug nor chaplet be ours,
 For gong, church and girdle monk-worn here goes!

523. How long wilt thou prate of the world's affliction and woe?
 Arise and in mirth let the moments come and go.
 Since the face of the earth with verdure is all ablowl
 Come, drain thou the goblet with ruby wine aflow!

524. Heed not the suggestions, O heart, of solicitude vain;
 Thought-taking and grieving forswear and the wine-chalice drain:
 Alone and unfettered abide; a wine-worshipper be;
 So a man shalt thou be and the bounds of perfection attain.

525. This visible world is a semblant, illusion-y-wrought :¹
 Who knoweth not this, learned man though he be, knoweth
 nought.

Sit ; the wine-chalice drain and be happy, nor weary thy heart
 With the idle concern of the empty phantasmas of thought.

¹ The pure Vedantic doctrine of the MAYA.

526. To the touch of her tress, like the wind, to attain is unceath ;
 On the steed of chagrin for her sake to draw rein is unceath :
 They say that the eye of the face its own self seeth not ;
 Nay, if she be our eye, then its sight to obtain is unceath.

527. Drink, drink, for nor knowledge nor practice of thine
 Availeth thee aught, but the Mercy Divine :
 Yon sort, that for assishness drinketh not wine,
 Thou may'st reckon, ywis, of the squinting-eyed kine.¹

¹ i.e., stupid, purblind cattle.

528. With a fair one, fresher-cheeked than the bloom apert of
 the rose,
 Set not the winecup from hand and loose not the skirt of the rose ;
 Or ever, at unawares, for the breath of the blast of Doom,
 The shirt of thy life become as the wind-rent shirt of the rose.

529. With Eternity,¹ zealot, how long wilt us ply ?
 From my thought, root and branch, I have long put it by.
 Drink wine, for there's nothing its place can supply ;
 Each knot of perplexment sheer wine doth untie.

¹ i.e. the next life, the future state.

530. Set the cup on my palm ; let the gurgle of wine make a third
 With the nightingale's note and the moan of the mocking-bird :
 To drink without music if fitting it were, the trill
 Of wine from the mouth of the flagon were never heard.

531. From the nadir of earth to the zenith of Saturn on high,
 All doubts have I solved and all problems of earth and of sky ;
 The toils of deceit and imposture o'ervaulted have I
 And all barriers¹ removed, save that only of "Needs must
 thou die."

¹ i.e., the toils and barriers prepared by the obscurantists for the hindrance
 of freethought and research.

532. Truth's mysteries to none for questioning are shown,
 No, nor for money spent nor wealth at random strown :
 Thy heart's blood save thou drink for fifty years alone,¹
 The way from Talk to Fact THEY'll not to thee make known.

¹ i.e., the Vedantist practice of ascetic abstraction from the things of the
 world, by which one attains to the knowledge of the undifferented Self.

533. To the prate of the folk of deceit,¹ O my heart, give no heed,
 That wine to religion and reason is harmful. Indeed,
 If easance of heart and vigour of spirit thou need,
 Drink wine to the sound of the song in the flowered mead.

¹ i.e. the pietists.

534. None ever saw Heaven or Hell, O my heart !
 From yonder none cometh to tell, O my heart !
 These our hopes and our fears rest on somewhat, whereof,
 Save the name, there's no trace, wot thou well, O my heart !

535. Of idle repining thy heart look thou rid;
 Drink wine all the year in cups brimmed to the lid:
 With the maid of the grape merrimake, for more worth
 Than the mother¹ allowed is the daughter² forbid.

¹ i.e. the grape. ² i.e. wine.

536. Love in perfection and charmer surpassing fair;
 Heart full of parlance and tongue dumb-stricken; O rare!
 Aught than this stranger, O Lord, what eye saw e'er?
 Marry, I thirst, and running water is there!¹

¹ App. description of an "amoureux transi."

537. How long, for the folk's unright, scorn's cup of brine
 drain we?

How long, for Fortune the base, the draught of repine drain we?
 Take heart, for the weariful days of the twenty-bow prayer¹
 are past;

Come, for the Festival's here; the rose-coloured wine drain we!

¹ *Tarawih*, the night-prayer of twenty bows (*rek'ad*) proper to Ramazan and five times the length of the ordinary (or four-bow) prayer of night. The Mohammedans measure their prayers (or, rather, acts of worship) by the number of bows or inclinations of the head made at stated intervals. The ordinary prayers, which occur five times daily, are from two to four bows each.

538. Of the Maker Almighty and Lord Compassionate
 Despair not, albeit thy sins be never so great:
 Though to-day thou shouldst die, dead-drunken, thy rotten bones
 To-morrow, belike, He'd pardon at any rate.¹

¹ i.e. thank you for nothing.

539. Though my sins be as wide as the world, there's hope alway
The hand of Thy mercy will be my help and stay:

"In the hour of thy weakness thy hand will I take,"¹ Thou
didst say:

Nay, seek not for weaker than that which I am to-day.

¹ App. a quotation; but I do not know of such a passage in the Koran.

540. Though the leaf of life on sorrow and sin I shall break,¹

The laugh of the wine the cup-heart within I shall break:²

Arise, let the brimming chalice go round and round;

It may be to nought that the world's chagrin I shall break.

¹ Syn. fold, turn down leaf of a book. ² "The laugh of wine" is its
foam and sparkle. "To break the laugh of wine" is to drink it, whereupon
the bubbles subside.

541. The courser of mirth in Thy pathway sped have we;

Sans mirth and liesse no moment life led have we;

Alack, for the door mistaken, I dread, have we;

Our nesting-place made in the robbers' stead have we.¹

¹ App. a lament for a misspent life.

542. O Lord, 't was Thou kneadedst the clay of me! What
should I do?

Silk and wool, 't was Thou spanst this array of me! What
should I do?

Every good thing and bad thing to being from me which should
come

On my forehead Thou wrot'st the first day of me! What
should I do?

543. At war with myself and my passions aye—what shall I do ?
 For my actions o'ertaken with grief and dismay—what shall I do ?
 Grant e'en that my sins, of Thy mercy, to me Thou forgive,
 Of my shame that Thou saw'st my transgressions, say—what
 shall I do ?

544. O soul, like the compasses twain I and you are ;
 Though one body we have, yet our heads,¹ indeed, two are :
 Round the one in the centre still circles the other
 Till the twain in the end brought together anew are.

¹ *Ser*, syn. "end" ; here meaning the points of the compasses.

545. The Sphere and mankind, who therein in amaze are,
 Chinese-lantern¹ like, well may it seem, to our gaze are :
 See, the sun is the lamp and the world is the lantern
 And the figures ourselves, that revolve round the blaze, are.

¹ *Fanous-i-kkiyal*, a kind of Chinese lantern, so poised as to revolve on its axis, moved by the draught of air set up by the lamp or candle in the middle.

546. In this age unto friendship 't is sin to pretend :
 Where is he one can trust ? Where's the man ? Where's the
 friend ?
 From all people 't is better the skirt to draw in
 And to all from afar speech and greeting to send.

547. They say that a tavern-besetter I am ;—I am :
 That a toper and wanton-abettor I am ;—I am.
 My outward I rede thee but little consider ; in sooth,
 Such at heart as (no worse and no better) I am, I am.

548. The door of desire on myself I have shut, so thereby
 I may 'scape from the need of the favours of low and high :
 If Soufi o' the mosque or monk of the convent I be,
 I know, and HE knoweth ; yea, that which I am, am I.

549. Beware lest thou deem I am self-existent ; nay,
 Nor yet self-chosen this blood-devouring way :¹
 Since this my existence in truth from HIM proceeds,
 Who am I ? where am I ? how am I ? prithee say.

¹ i.e. the thorny path of the seeker of objectivation : see ante, Quatrain 532.

550. We no breath without wine, since we first saw the light, are ;
 'Tis the Night of Appointment¹ and drunk we to-night are :
 Lip to lip of the cup, breast to breast of the jar,
 Hand on neck of the flask, we till morning wax white are.

¹ *Sheb-i-Chadr*, the Night of Foreappointment or Foreordnance, commonly, but erroneously, called the Night of Power. On this night the Koran is fabled to have been sent down from heaven, and it is accordingly considered the most sacred of the Muslim year. In this case, however, the Night of *Berat* (15th of Sheban : see post, Quatrain 742), which is also popularly, but wrongly, called the Night of *Chadr*, is meant, as the exact date of the Night of Foreordnance is not known, although it is conjectured, on the authority of one of Mohammed's obiter dicta, to fall on the 20th, 22nd, 24th or 28th of *Ramazan*.

551. The object¹ of all the creation are we²;
 For the wise the pearl past estimation are we :
 If the world be God's seal-ring, the posy, to wit,
 On the signet engraved, past negation, are we.

¹ *Marrowd*, i.e. the final cause.

² "i.e. mankind."—*Luck. Comm.*

552. Hand on hand in agreement, O my fair, set we !
 The foot of liesse on the head of care set we !
 Let's drink in the dawn, for many a dawn will break
 When eye on the morning no more for e'er set we.

553. In this world-house, wherein, without sorrow and pain,
 breath we draw not,
 'T were well that, excepting the winecup to drain, breath we
 draw not.
 When dawn breaketh, arise and drink cup upon cup of the
 vine-juice ;
 For the dawn many a time yet will break when again breath we
 draw not.

554. An hundred kinds of blame for love of thee I'd bear ;
 And if this pact I break, the penalty I'd bear ;
 If life sufficed thereto, thy cruelties are less
 Than to the Judgment Day, did God decree, I'd bear.

555. No drop of cold water, by way of delight, we swallow
 But a draught, at the hand of chagrin, forthright we swallow ;
 Nor in anyone's salt, God wot, do we dip a morsel
 But roast meat of our liver, in our despite, we swallow.¹

¹ I.e., we never partake of anyone's hospitality but he makes us eat our hearts for mortification and humiliation.

556. What day the vine-juice in the town should fail me,
 No theriac Time could proffer would avail me :
 World's woe a poison is and wine its theriac ;
This of my fear I drink lest *that* assail me.

557. The queen didst thou move ; woe-drunken I straight became
 And thy cruelties' pawn, from a knight I was late, became ;
 Then, when of the game of bishop and king I despaired,
 I castled,¹ alack ! and incontinent mate became.²

¹ *Rook der rook-i-low*, lit. "rook to thy rook" (syn. "cheek to thy cheek")
 I set. ² A chess quatrain, addressed to the beloved.

558. May my heart inclined to the vine-juice sheer abide for aye !
 May the sound of the viol and reed in my ear abide for aye !
 If the potters a gugglet, when I am dead, make of my clay,
 May that gugglet full of the grape-blood clear abide for aye !

559. O Sphere, with thy course content no whit am I;
 Unhand me, seeing for bondage unfit am I:
 If to the witless and worthless thou still incline,
 No such great matter for worth and wit am I.¹

¹ i.e., I am not so deserving that thou needest exclude me from thy good graces.

560. Chief of those in the tavern the winecup who ply am I;
 To sin from obedience fallen from on high am I:
 Yea, one who, from wine unmingled and heart a-bleed,
 Through the livelong night unto God doth cry am I.

561. Live without drinking and gullet dry I cannot;
 The burden of life without wine aby I cannot:
 The slave of that moment am I, when saith the skinker,
 "Come, take yet another cup!" and I, I cannot.

562. Since the world's still a-flit, save by practice do aught I
 will not;
 Save to rose-coloured wine and to joyance, take thought I will not:
 "Of wine to repent," quoth they, "of His grace God bring
 thee!"
 Nay, sure He'll *not* bring; and e'en if He brought, I will not.

563. Life and death, as apparent to eye, have I known;
 All things to the core, low and high, have I known;
 But of knowledge itself I despair if a state,
 That with drunkenness ever could vie, have I known.

564. The cup of chagrin for fate's changes no more let us drink ;
Nought save rose-coloured wine, pure and limpid, galore, let us
drink :

Wine 's the blood of the world and the world 't is our heart's
blood that sheds ;

Why not, then, the blood of our slayer's heart's core let us drink ?

565. We, who 're transported with ecstasy's wine become,
We, who 're upraised to the heavens nine become,
From the body's pollution all freed, in fine, become ;
We came from the dust and dust, by this sign, become.¹

¹ i.e., the best and wisest and noblest and holiest must all die.

566. Than thou, O City Mufti,¹ aye busier² are we ;
Than thou, for all our toping, still soberer are we :
Thou drink'st the blood of mortals,³ we of the vine ; tell truth :
Bloodthirstier art thou, then ? bloodthirstier are we ?

¹ *Mufti*, properly a doctor of the law, who delivers *fatwas* or decisions upon canonical questions and acts as assessor to the Cadi or magistrate ; but here, apparently, the magistrate himself. ² *Pur-i-karter*, lit. "fuller of business, work," which seems meaningless : *quære*, "we are more *useful* than thou" ? ³ Alluding to the well-known venality of Oriental magistrates.

567. One hand on the Koran and one on the bowl,
Now the lawful and now the forbidden's our goal :
'Neath yon turquoise-hued dome, stretched from pole unto pole,
We're nor infidels sheer neither Muslims heart-whole.

568. Yea, wine I drink, yet do not intoxication practise ;
 And save upon the goblet, no usurpation practise :
 Why thus a wine-adorer I am, wouldst know ? 'Tis, marry,
 That I may not, thy fashion, *self*-adoration practise.

569. In quest of Jem's cup the world we've measured, left and
 right ;

We sat not to rest by day nor lay down to sleep by night :
 But, when from the Master we heard the description thereof,
 behold,

The world-showing cup of Jem was none other than our own
 spright.¹

¹ Cf. Hafiz, "The heart of the lover is the world-showing cup of Jem." The World-Showing Cup is the Vedantic "Light within the heart, the spiritual unity of undifferented being, to be seen only with the mind." See ante, Quatrain 413, note.

570. Alack, without profit forwearied and worn have we been !
 By the sickle of giddy-pate Fortune still shorn have we been !
 Wellaway ! not a glance of the eye to our wish have we lived ;
 Nay, nor truly alive, since the day we were born, have we been.

571. Of the patchcoat¹ a wad on the winejar to lay have we made ;
 With the winehouse's dust ablution, to-day, have we made :²
 In the tavern, belike, the life yet again we may find
 Wherewithal in the mosque-school for nothing away have we
 made.

¹ *Khairat*, the dervish-gown : see ante, Quatrain 339. ² An audacious allusion to the canon of Mohammed authorizing ablution with dust or sand, in default of water.

572. Although to the mosque for an urgent affair have I come,
 God wotteth that not for the sake of the prayer have I come !
 A prayer-carpet thence one day I purloined ; 't is grown old
 And another to crib, time and time again there have I come.

573. If in Ramazan-tide, in religion's despite, I did eat,
 Think not that for lewdness or ign'rance downright I did eat :
 For oppression of fasting, my day as my night was become ;
 Methought 't was the meal of the hour before light¹ I did eat.

¹ i.e., the principal repast of the day in Ramazan-time, when, as the fast lasts from the moment when one can distinguish a black thread from a white till the corresponding moment at dusk, the Mohammedans eat a solid meal an hour before dawn, to fortify them against the fatigues of the coming day.

574. The things of the world on what fashion soe'er I perceive,
 All the folk at a venture set down here and there¹ I perceive ;
 Nay, glory to God ! on its case howsoever I look,
 My own disappointment in all things whate'er I perceive.

¹ i.e. placed and endowed without reference to merit.

575. In the circle of being set too late become are we ;
 Degraded, alas ! from man's estate become are we :
 Since Life to the wish of our heart did never yet proceed,
 Would God it were sped, for satiate become are we !

576. The crowns of the Khan¹ and of Kei, in our need, come
let us sell !

Yea, turban and lawn for the song of the reed come let us sell !
The chaplet, vauntcourier that is of the army of fraud and deceit,
For a draught of the vine-juice red, each bead, come let us sell !

¹ i.e. of Tartary.

577. Since in this world for us is no abiding-stead,
An error grave were life, sans wine and wanton led :
How long of Old and New wilt prate, thou addlehead ?
What matters Old or New to me, when I am dead ?

578. From nothingness clean we came and all unclean we go ;
Easeful we came and full of dole and teen we go :
In the fire of the heart we fell for the water of the eye ;
Life to the wind we cast and to earth e'en we go.

579. When my head at the foot of doom laid low shall become,
When I by death's hand plucked bare as a crow shall become,
Beware ye lest aught but winepots ye make of my clay ;
Belike, when they're filled,¹ I alive once mo' shall become.

¹ Var. : "with the scent of the wine."

580. My soul for regret of the past is still in pain ;
My heart for the fear of the morrow is cleft in twain ;
But, the jewel of life once loosed from the golden chain,
Regret and thought-taking and fear all go in its train.¹

¹ i.e., personality ceases with death.

381. Though to the zenith, like fire, we wing it heavens-high,
 Though purer than running water we be, yet, by and by,
 Into the earth we must go, for earth are thou and I :
 Wind is the world ; give wine ! Let 's drink before we die.

382. Though sins beyond count committed in truth have I,
 Sinned 'gainst my own soul and body and youth have I.¹
 If I sin and repent me and sin afresh, 't is because
 Unlimited faith in Thy bounty and ruth have I.

¹ i.e., I have only sinned against myself, not against others.

383. Though wine to the Faith and the Way, indeed, is contrary,
 From the chewing of yesterday's cud¹ it still delivereth me ;
 Why wine thus I love dost Thou know ? It is because thereby
 An instant, set free from myself, I live again with THREE.²

¹ Lit. "the eating of yesterday," i.e. fretting over the past. ² This quatrain may be taken as the profession of faith of the ecstatic, who seeks "selflessness," i.e. objectivation, from wine.

384. To a master awhile, ere childhood's gone, we fare ;
 Awhile, in self-mast'ry rejoicing, anon, we fare :
 Nay, hark, whilst I tell thee the end of our affair ;
 We come from the earth and the wind upon we fare.

385. To-day that no dolour from Fate malign drink we,
 Together once more of the juice of the vine drink we ;
 For the Angel of Doom, in the hour of our passing hence,
 Will grant us no quarter whilst somewhat of wine drink we.

586. Friend, let to-morrow's troubles go hang for me and thee !
 Come, profit by this moment of life, before it flee :
 To-morrow, when we've quitted this ancient hostel,¹ we
 With seven thousand ages shall fellow-travellers be.

¹ The world.

587. O many's the night since eyes on thy mole set we !¹
 O many's the dawn since lips to the bowl set we !
 Come, let us arise and drink ere the break of the morn,
 So the foot of liesse on the head of dole set we !

¹ Var. : "since we have winked (or closed) the eye."

588. Bitter wine, old and bitter,¹ for ever I swill ;
 E'en o' Ramazan Friday forenights² I drink still.
 The grape, which is lawful, O God, in the jar
 Make not bitter, to hinder me drinking my fill !³

¹ i.e. grown bitter with age. ² i.e. our Thursday night, the Mobammedan day beginning at sunset. ³ These last two lines are very obscure and probably corrupt ; they run, literally, "The lawful grape itself in the jar put," i.e. made into wine, "barkye, make it not bitter, O God, that I shall" or may "not eat," i.e. drink "[it]." The drift appears to be a complaint that God should make the sweet and unforbidden grape bitter and forbidden when made into wine.

589. At break of dawn, in the tavern, every day, am I ;
 Road-mate of those that travel transgression's way¹ am I :
 O God, since Thou knowest the secrets, vouchsafe me of Thy grace
 Till unto Thee heart-inclining become to pray am I.²

¹ Lit. "the Calenders of Transgression," i.e. the confirmed toppers, those who are as zealous in the practice of things unlawful and transgressions of the Law (*dtamaf*) as the true Calenders profess to be in the practice of good works and acts of obedience and devotion (*dia'af*). ² This line is obscure and probably corrupt ; the meaning appears to be, "O God, if Thou wilt have me a devotee, do Thou take the pains to inform me with grace to that end."

590. By wine from men's heads overweening's awayed ;
 By wine are perplexment and doubting allayed :
 Had Iblis one draught of the wine-juice essayed,
 Two thousand prostrations to Adam he'd made.¹

¹ According to Mohammedan legend, the cause of the disgrace of Iblis (Satan) was his refusal to prostrate himself, when ordered by God to do so, before Adam, whom he naturally enough regarded as a trumpety upstart, more by token that he had been an eye-witness of the process of making the father of the human race from vile clay, whilst he himself owed his origin to the nobler element, fire.

591. By the troubles of Fortune we set not a grain ; yea, we're
 happy.
 If breakfast's vouchsafed, we from dinner abstain ; yea, we're
 happy.
 Since cooked meat is ours from the kitchen of Love,
 On no one we build expectations in vain ; yea, we're happy.

592. In the winehouse of Love still offering prayer I go ;
 At the lamp of her cheek melting for e'er I go :
 With the wine of her love having purification¹ made,
 Her face still adoring, my idol fair, I go.

¹ i.e. the ablution obligatory before prayer.

593. For Fortune's vicissitudes sad, day and night, am I ;
 Against my vile nature fore'er in despite am I :
 Neither sapient enough from this world to take flight am I
 Nor therein to sit careless discreet enough quite am I.

594. How long shall the bondmen of every-day sense¹ we be ?
 What matter if living, an age or day hence, we be ?
 Up, cupbearer ; quick, the winecup in hand give, before
 By the wind of death strewn to the elements we be.²

¹ i.e. mean prudence, the care of daily bread, etc.
 potter's workshop pots we be."

² Var. : "in the

595. How long wilt thou revile us, O stupid pietist ?
 We're toppers of the tavern, the winecup still in fist :
 With rosaries thou 'rt busy, dissembling and deceit ;
 With wine and wench and minstrel *we*'re happy as we list.

596. On the carpet of earth, lo ! sleepers galore we see
 And under the face thereof hidden yet more we see :
 On the desert of non-existence wherever we look,
 The Not-yet-come and the Gone-before we see.

597. I fear, since hereafter the world we ne'er shall regain,
 Our comrades no more and our messmates we there shall regain ;
 So come, by to-day let us profit, what while we yet live,
 For maybe we never a moment as fair shall regain.

598. Yea, toppers and merry with wine are we still ;
 In our banquet, save wine and the winecup, is nil :
 With thy prate, foolish zealot, our ears leave to fill ;
 With the Friend's lip and wine we are happy at will.

599. In Thy mercy I trust and of sin so I reck not ;
 Of my faith in Thy care, of the way's woe I reck not :
 Since Thy favour white-faced ¹ will assuredly raise me,
 Of the Black Book ² I reck not a grain, no, I reck not.

¹ According to the Mohammedans, the wicked will arise at the Last Day with black faces, whilst those of the just will be white. ² The Black Book is that in which each man's sins are recorded and which will bear witness against him on the Judgment Day.

600. The Feast 'tis: come, rose-coloured wine again let us
 drink ;
 To the wail of the harp and the ghittern's strain, let us drink :
 With the light-hearted friend, a moment or two, let us sit
 And of wine, heavy measure, ¹ a pottle or twain let us drink.

¹ i.e. full cups.

601. Come, friend: the morrow's care no longer let's devour ;
 Enjoy this moment's sweet, before it turn to sour :
 Except by HIS command, no sin of ours exists ;
 Then, wherefore fret oneself anent the coming hour ?

602. Beware lest thou think that death and its need I fear,
 That the flight of the soul from the body's wede I fear.
 Death, since it is certain, no fear thereof have I ;
 But, since I've lived ill, 't is that, indeed, I fear.

603. If an infidel, drunk with the Magians' wine, I am,—I am ;
 If idolater, scoffer at things Divine, I am,—I am :
 Each sect and each sort hath a different opinion of me ;
 Forsooth, I'm my own ; yea, and such as, in fine, I am, I am.

604. Arise and come, so hand upon lute smite we ;
 Let's tipple and good on evil repute smite we :¹
 What season we drink, in the tavern let's drink and the flask
 Of name and of shame on the stones underfoot smite we.²

¹ i.e., in modern parlance, "knock their heads together," cast the care of good and ill repute to the winds. ² Same meaning.

605. The hand on the skirt of the faithless friend will we clap ;
 Wine drink we and good reputation on ill we clap ;
 The prayer-rug we sell to buy us a cup of wine
 And repute on the stones to shatter and spill we clap.

606. Art thou an adépt, that I may give thee to know
 What man hath been aye since the first of his matter ? Lo,
 One stricken of sorrow and moulded with clay of woe,
 The world he enjoyeth¹ a moment and riseth to go.

¹ Lit. "eateth."

607. Beware ; in the tavern outcry look ye make not
 And commotion, in passing it by, look ye make not !
 Book¹ and turban for wine let us sell, shun the mosque-schools,
 But a shrug of the shoulders therenigh look ye make not !²

¹ i.e., probably, the Book *par excellence*, the Koran. ² *Doushd seden*, syn. "make contention." Meaning app. "Do what you like, but make no stir about it." *Hiberniké*, "If you must make a noise, make it quietly." The secret of life !

608. "The Joseph¹ of Egypt am I," quoth the rose, "of the mead.
A ruby of price, with a mouth full of gold,² I'm, indeed."

"What Joseph-like token," I questioned her, "hast thou to show?"

And she, "To my coat blood-bedyed," answered, "hast thou no heed?"³

¹ Joseph is the Oriental type of beauty. ² i.e. the gold-coloured stamens. ³ Alluding to Joseph's bloody coat and to the blood-red blossom of the rose.

609. To thy tress, O my fair, if violence say I do,
Lo, what is the wrong, to speak in truth's way, I do?
My own distraught heart in its meshes entangled I see;
Sure, legerdemain¹ with my own proper heart may I do!

¹ *Dest-basi*, sleight of hand (lit. "hand-play"); i.e., "surely I may handle my own heart."

610. The more self-removed, existent the more am I;
The lowlier abased, the higher a-soar am I;
And strangest of all is this, from existence's wine
The sob'rer I am, the drunker therefor am I.¹

¹ The drunkenness here spoken of is that of "ecstasy" and the sobriety its opposite, concern with and attachment to the things of the world. The meaning of course turns on the ecstatic state of abnegation and objectivation (absence from self, "selflessness," as the Persians call it, *Trunkenheit ohne Wein*), which characterizes the true self-surrendering lover and servant of the ideal, who delights in abasing himself before the object of love, feeling that, in so doing, he exalts himself.

611. 'Tis the dawning: our lips to the rose-coloured wine still
we clap;

'Gainst the stones this frail flask of repute, good and ill, we clap:
From our overlong hoping the hand we'll withdraw¹ and instead
On the skirt of the harp and the loveling's long tress will we clap.

¹ i.e., we will renounce our long (or far-reaching, over-ambitious) hopes.
The word "long" is introduced for sake of word-play with "long tress."

612. 'Tis well with the winecup the heart a-gee to make
And little account of "Been" and "To be" to make
And this prisoner-soul, in the gaol of the fleeting world,
From the bondage of reason a moment free to make.

613. By the potters' quarter whenever I take my way,
I fancy myself a pot mid the pots' array;
But many a winepot¹ I'll drain before the day
When I make the potter a present of this my clay.

¹ Lit. a sugar-jar, i.e. = many pots.

614. In the hour when, for doom, of the fugitives¹ I become,
From existence's bough when a shedder of leaves I become,
The world through the sieve, of the joy of my heart, I shall pass,
Ere dust, in my turn, in the scavengers' sieves I become.

¹ i.e. from life.

615. Not a day from the world and its bondage free have I won ;
 Of existence to breathe not a moment in glee have I won :
 Apprenticeship long unto Fortune, indeed, have I served,
 Nor in this world nor that yet a master to be have I won.

616. That wail, which I before no intimate could utter,
 That secret word,¹ which I to friend nor mate could utter,
 If any heard save THOU, I found, I should that moment
 Expire, ere I a word, little or great, could utter.

¹ The secret between the heart and God.

617. My jewel of self¹ for a penny fee² I'd not give ;
 My pains for thy sake for all balsams that be I'd not give :
 The dust of thy door for Jem's empery I'd not give ;
 One hair of thy head for the earth and the sea I'd not give.³

¹ i.e. my individuality, essence, secret hope. ² *Chind-i-kem*, lit.
 "small price." ³ i.e., "All other pleasures are not worth its pains."

618. 'Tis the rose-season ; merry my fill will I make ;
 Marry, free with the Law, at my will, will I make :
 Yea, with tulip-cheeked maids tulip-beds for a while
 On the sward, with the winedregs I spill, will I make.

619. My foes a philosopher¹ wrongfully swear I am :
 God knoweth that nothing of this they declare I am !
 Nay, I know not how into this nest of affliction and woe
 I came and still less know I how, what and where I am.

¹ i.e. a follower of the Greek rationalist school.

620. Up, dance, so that we may clap hands, whilst wine drink we ;
 To that tipsy narcissus¹-eye of thine drink we !
 What's a mere score of cups ? Nay, the marvellous pleasure is
 When goblets threescore of the juice of the vine drink we.

¹ "Tipsy Narcissus" ; favourite Oriental simile for a large, languishing eye. The flower in question, the *Narcissus poeticus*, is an apt object of comparison, owing to its pensile habit and its large white corolla, with the dark corona in the middle, like the iris of the eye, surrounded by the sclerotic.

621. On the lip of the jar our place of prayer we've made ;
 Ourselves since new men with the red wine rare we've made,
 Belike, in the tavern the life we may regain,
 Wherewith in the convents away whilere we've made.

622. What while on this greensward fulfilled with mirth we are,
 To yon green¹ steed of heaven² alike in worth we are :
 With fair ones, green-downed,³ come, green⁴ let us drink on the
 green,
 Or ever beneath the green in the earth we are.⁵

¹ Syn. "bay," also "blue." ² i.e. the skies. ³ "Green-downed," i.e. with tender down sprouting on cheek and lip, what we should call "velvet-, downy-cheeked." ⁴ "Green," i.e. wine. ⁵ I have rendered this quatrain literally, as an example of the curious way in which the Persians deal with colour-names. See note to Quatrain 335, ante.

623. From me to the Chosen One¹ greeting convey
 And with all due observance to him do ye say :
 "O Hashimi² lord, by the Law, tell me, pray,
 Why is wine made unlawful and lawful sour whey ?"

¹ *Musaddefa*, an epithet of Mohammed.
 from his great-grandfather, Hashim.

² Family name of Mohammed,

624. From me to Kheyyam salutation convey
 And "Kheyyam, thou'rt a blockhead!" to him do ye say.
 "When said I that wine is unlawful? Away!
 To ripe ones 't is lawful, to unripe ones nay."¹

¹ Lit. "cooked," i.e. the wise. ² Lit. "raw," i.e. dunces. ³ Mohammed's answer to the foregoing quatrain.

625. Since ill's in God's sight that which I, I have willed,
 How, then, should come right that which I, I have willed?
 If nought be correct that Himself hath not willed,
 Then all's error quite that which I, I have willed.

626. Quoth I: "Rose-coloured wine again and for aye I drink not:
 'Tis the blood of the vine and blood, come what may, I drink
 not."

Quoth my elder to me, "Harkye, speak'st thou in jest or in
 earnest?"

Quoth I, "Jest do I e'er when wine, wellaway! I drink not?"

627. In pursuit of what thing soever I take my flight,¹
 Whatsoe'er I essay in the love of thee, day or night,
 The tears from my eyes never leave for a moment to flow
 Till such time as I turn in another direction my sight.²

¹ i.e. as does a bird of prey. ² Meaning app. "Whatever I undertake,
 Fortune ceases not to plague and torment me till I renounce my intent."

628. Infinity's secrets to read neither thou knowest nor I;
 The word of the puzzle, indeed, neither thou knowest nor I:
 'Tis hidden the curtain behind, far, far from our question removed:
 When the fall of the curtain's decreed neither thou knowest nor I.

629. The world is the body of which God the Most High is the
soul;

The angels, after their kinds, are the senses that serve for the
whole:

The heavens and the elements four and the kingdoms three¹ are
the limbs:

All else is deception and this is the Unity true and sole.²

¹ i.e., animal, vegetable and mineral. ² A quatrain written apparently
in ridicule of the Muslim system of cosmogony.

630. No day of thy course, old Sphere, but the date-palm-tree
Of my joyance is rooted up and o'erthrown by thee;
And 'tis strange that to those who deserve not to fall in thy snare¹
There is no one to say, "It is perilous; leave it be."²

¹ "The snare-place or ambush of Fortune is the world."—*Luck. Comm.*
² i.e., to warn the unincarnated soul, whilst yet in the realm of the *Ding an sich*, against the Will-to-be.

631. O Fortune, ne'er bringest thou aught of gain to me;
Lo! balsam to others thou bringest and pain to me:
To propitiate thee what pains have I taken and what
In war hath been done that thou dost not again to me!¹

¹ i.e., "what cruelties and hostilities have ever been practised by one enemy
on another in war that thou hast not practised on me?"

632. Up, fret not thyself for this transient world's despite!
Be merry and spend thou a moment in heart's delight.
In the nature of Fortune if aught of constancy were,
The turn had not come to thee from another wight.

633. For good name noted 't is good and meet to be ;
 'T is scorn afflicted for Fate's defeat to be :
 Crop-sick with the fumes of the vine-juice sweet to be
 Is better than drunk with one's own conceit to be.

634. O Lord, on this woeful breast of mine have mercy !
 On this spirit and heart opprest of mine have mercy !
 On this foot, that's the tavern's guest, of mine have mercy !
 On this hand, the winecup-possess, of mine have mercy !

635. The gladsome heart behoveth with grief not wear away ;
 Our happy time behoveth 'gainst trouble's stones not bray :
 That which for us the future reserveth who can say ?
 Behoveth wine and wanton and ease without affray.

636. Comrade or mate in this imbroglio unkenned is
 Of me ; my own lament my only bosom-friend is :
 Since that my weeping eye for woe still tear-a-spend is,
 My head will sure succumb or e'er my grief at end is.

637. This wretched, woeful, distracted heart of mine
 Is never sober from love of yon sweetheart of mine :
 The day when THEY gave out the wine of loverhood,
 From the blood of the liver ¹ THEY drew this part of mine.

¹ The liver is the seat of love according to the Orientals, who speak of "liver-blood" as we of "heart's blood." The heart, on the contrary, for them is the seat of the reason.

638. One folk of religion and sects doth surmise
 And another 'twixt doubting and certitude sighs ;
 Then sudden comes one from his ambush and cries,
 " O fools, neither this way nor that the Path lies."

639. O thou, who the things of the world regardest aye,
 Hast thou no thought or concern for the Heavy Day¹ ?
 Nay, prithee, a moment return to thyself and think ;
 Consider the Days² and how with others deal they.

¹ I.e. the Judgment Day.

² I.e. Time or Fortune.

640. " Drink less," they bid me again and again, " than this :
 Nay, what's thine excuse that thou dost not abstain from this ?"
 My excuse is the cheek of the Friend and the morning-draught :
 Come, tell but the truth : what excuse is more plain than this ?

641. Might I God's power o'er the universe acquire,
 I'd do away with yon firmament entire
 And a bran-new heaven¹ I'd fashion me on such wise
 That the righteous should eath attain his heart's desire.

¹ Synonymous with " Fortune."

642. Nay, art not ashamed this knav'ry of thine to do
 And leave the commands and forbiddals Divine to do ?
 Nay, grant the whole world, end to end, should thy good become,
 Save leave it and go, what think'st thou in fine to do ?¹

¹ Addressed to some " Bonanza King " of the period.

643. Lo, hither art thou come, the sovranty¹ to do ;
 Come to thyself and leave this knavery to do :
 Nought wast thou yesterday and wilt to-morrow be ;
 'Tis patent what thou 'rt like to-day, perdie, to do.

¹ The sovranty in question is apparently the exercise of the rights of manhood, man being "the heir of the ages."

644. O thou who 'rt the cream of old friends, to my counsel
 give ear ;

Of Fortune the wayward seek nothing, for hope or for fear :
 In the nook of content sit, nor draw thou Life's battlefield near,
 But divert thee with gazing afar on the play of the Sphere.

645. If Fortune thou 'dst have bow the neck before thee,
 Thy spirit behoveth still fortified be :

To believe and drink wine it behoveth like me,
 Ay, and still from the cark of the world to sit free.

646. O eye,¹ see the goblet with life and spright pregnant ;
 Like jasmine,² with Redbud blooms ruddy-bright pregnant :
 Nay, I err, since, for stress of sheer subtlety, wine
 A water of fire is, with liquid light pregnant.

¹ Term of endearment, addressed to the cupbearer. ² *Scurm*, syn.
 "white rose," i.e. the clear glass cup.

647. List not to the prate of the turncoat-become ones ;¹
 Take wine from the Tiraz²-in-Tartary-come ones :
 One by one go the up-from-nonentity-come ones ;
 No sign is of back-to-existence-y-come ones.

¹ i.e. timeservers, hypocrites.

² *Tiraz*, a town and district celebrated for pretty girls.

648. There's a bull in the sky and his name is Perwîn¹
 And another bull under the earth is, unseen :²
 Ope the eyes of thy wit and there's nothing, I ween,
 But a handful of asses the two bulls between.³

¹ i.e., the Zodiacal constellation Taurus, also (more commonly) the Pleiades, which form part of it. ² The Muslim cosmographers fable the earth to be supported by a bull standing on a fish. ³ "Between the two bulls" (more commonly, "'twixt fish and bull") is a proverbial expression, meaning "between the pole and the centre," i.e. on the earth's surface.

649. Behoveth living by reason's rule to do,
 And on this fashion thou know'st not, fool, to do ;
 But Fate, thy teacher, will cuff thy head till thee,
 By dint of buffets, aright it school to do.

650. For the sake of the solace and ease, yesternight, of my heart,
 In the winehouse that fair one, who is the delight of my heart,
 A brimming cup brought me with "Take thou and drink it."
 Quoth I,
 "Not so." "For the sake," but she answered forthright, "of
 my heart."

651. O thou, who'rt the flower and the abstract of things mundane,
 Come, leave thou the care for a moment of loss and of gain :
 One cup from the hand of the Skinker Eternal drain,¹
 So freed shalt thou be from the cark of the worlds twain.

¹ i.e., drink of the wine of the ideal.

652. Since the harvest of every man's life in this marish of day
and night¹

Is nought but affliction and woe till² the giving up of the spright,
O happy is he from the world who speedily taketh flight³
And easeful, easeful the soul that cometh ne'er to the light!⁴

¹ *Shouritan*; i.e. the world. ² *Ta*, syn. "even to." ³ "Whom
the Gods love die young." ⁴ i.e. that is never born into this world of woe.

653. Know, friend, that vouchsafed by the ever-revolving Sphere
To two sorts of men are fortune and favour and cheer:
Those who've full knowledge of good and of bad and those
Of themselves and the things of the world who're in ignorance
sheer.

654. Men's souls are all grown water and hearts all blood for
dismay;
Ah, when will the truth from the curtain come forth to the light
of day?
Alack, in despite of thy prudence, the course of the sorry Sphere
This world from thy grasp still beareth and thee from *both* worlds
away!

655. 'Tis better wine to drink and rose-cheeked maids to woo
Than pietism and hypocrisy to do:
If lovers all to hell and winebibbers be doomed,
Ah, who would wish to see the face of heaven, who?

656. If unrepenting this life I've led of mine,
 No sin's this drinking the vine-juice red of mine :
 Wine is forbidden, indeed, to the profane ;
 Th' initiates' ¹ toping be on this head of mine ! ²

¹ *Ahl-i-ras*, lit. "the people, sons or children, of the secret." ² i.e., what is wrong for the profane is right for the initiates, who are independent of law. "All the sin they commit by drinking wine I will be responsible for." In vulgar parlance, "I could put it in my eye and see none the worse for it."

657. How long shall I go grieving, because from this old jail,
 The world, for my occasions, appeareth head nor tail ? ¹
 Ere I bind on my burdens, to leave this house of life,
 Skinker, give wine, for wine is the charm withouten fail. ²

¹ i.e. nothing happens to my need. ² i.e. against chagrin.

658. Art thou no hunter ? Of the chase speak thou not ;
 Aught that's uncalled for, to expound seek thou not ;
 Nay, if thine Elder of thee seek exposition,
 The eyes' mute language with the tongue eke thou not. ¹

¹ Evidently by some Soufi poet. It reads like an extract from a Soufi breviary.

659. The things of the world to my spirit light make Thou ;
 My ill deeds hid from the people's sight make Thou ;
 Hold me but merry to-day and to-morrow of me
 What to Thy clemency seemeth right make Thou.

660. O Lord, from grace and rejection ¹ still deliver me !
 Fill me with Thee, from self and will deliver me !
 Sober, of good and ill I'm conscious : make me Thou
 Drunken and so from good and ill deliver me.

¹ I.e. from the concern thereof

661. An if thou know to seize the skirt of Fortune fair,
 God wot, thou may'st defy Life's load of toil and care ;
 But, if thy hand's o'er short ¹ to cope withal, beware !
 Withdraw it thence, for long's the word of the affair.²

¹ I.e. weak. ² I.e., the pursuit of fortune demands strenuous and long-continued effort.

662. For all the oppression I suffer from yonder mirror-like Sphere,
 My cheek as the cup is, hollow and brimmed with many a tear.
 Ay, marry, for Fortune's changes, the base that fosters the base,
 The heart in my breast as a flagon, with blood fulfilled, is sheer.

663. A toper saw I seated alone in a waste place ;
 Islam nor infidelity he had nor goods nor grace ;
 Nor God nor Truth nor Surety nor Law nor head nor base :
 In the two worlds whose courage sufficeth to this case ? ¹

¹ A poey for Odilon Redon's sketch, "Un vieux fou dans un paysage morne." Apparently, a description of the Vedantic "perfected sage" in the act of "Yoga" or mystic abstraction.

664. Communion with any save toppers forswear do thou ;
 Lay waste the foundations of fasting and prayer do thou.
 In fine, from Kheyyam hearken thou this sage counsel, O friend :
 Drink, rob, an thou wilt, but what's righteous and fair do thou !¹

¹ i.e., Morals and laws are but a fable agreed upon, of which he who follows the Higher Law is independent. Cf. the Upanishads : "The sage of perfect insight, who knoweth the Self, is subject to no moral law."

665. Unto whoso the world apprehendeth, its loss and its gain,
 Its joy and chagrin and vexation all one are and vain :
 Since the world, with its good and its evil, must come to an end,
 O life, an thou wilt, be all balm ! an thou wilt, be all pain !

666. The day that is past in memory bear thou not ;
 Of to-morrow, that's yet to come, despair thou not ;
 For the things which are gone and ended care thou not ;
 Live merry and life to the wind let fare thou not.

667. Now the mead with the sound of the Thousand-Tales'¹
 singing is ringing,
 Take the wine the fair, tipsily to and fro swinging,² is bringing :
 Up, the rosebud of gladness hath blossomed ! Awhile in the
 garden
 Make merry, for life, whilst to sorrow thou'rt clinging, is winging.

¹ *Hear Distan*, Thousand Tales, another name of the *Hear Awas* or *Hear* alone, as before explained, a kind of nightingale with many notes. ² As is well known, it is a favourite trick with Oriental writers to liken the graceful swimming gait of the fair to the staggering movements of a drunkard.

668. Now that the Thousand-Tales telleth her tale of love to
 the treen,
 Look thou take nought but the winecup from lovelings of
 languorous mien:
 Arise, for the rosebud of gladness hath flowered forth into sheen;
 A day or two take thou thy portion of ease in the garden green.¹

¹ Variant of No. 667.

669. Liquid life in the chalice we troll is flowing, flowing;
 In the grape-blood's incorporate soul is flowing, flowing;
 In the heart of the frozen water¹ fluid fire is;
 Red ruby in crystal bowl is flowing, flowing.

¹ i.e. the crystal cup.

670. The day when the blessed hosts of this earthly fane
 The bridlehand over the courser of self regain,
 Strew thou me not, like the tulip, with bloody rain,
 Or forth from the dust of thy street I shall rise again.¹

¹ i.e., "When the vital spirits bind on their burdens for the journey to the next world, i.e. when I am dead (*Luck. Comm.*), weep no bloody tears over me, making my heart bloodstained like that of the tulip, or I shall come to life again." Addressed to the beloved.

671. The evil dealing of yonder revolving bowl¹ regard;
 The world of all friends and comrades grown empty, O soul,
 regard;
 An thou mayest, a moment yet live to thyself: seek not
 The morrow; let yesterday go; the present sole regard.

¹ i.e. the heavens, Fortune.

672. In this world of dust, from pole unto pole, sooth to speak,
 How straitly soever the people of insight seek,
 From faithless Fortune there's nought, God wot, to gain
 Save wine of the ruby's hue and the loveling's cheek.

673. With rose-coloured wine and a well-shapen may,
 Yesternight on the marge of a streamlet I lay,
 Before us a shell,¹ for the sheen of whose pearl²
 The herald³ of morning came forth to the day.⁴

¹ i.e. a shell-shaped wine-vessel; name often applied to an ordinary glass goblet. ² i.e. the wine therein. ³ Lit. "drum-beater," i.e.

"announcer"; cock? ⁴ Thinking, for the lustre of the wine, that it was time for daybreak.

674. Of our coming and going,¹ lo! where's the behoof? Where?
 To the warp of the hope of our life where's the woof?² Where?
 Where's the smoke³ in this world of the many high souls
 who've consumed,
 Dust and ashes become, 'neath yon firmament's roof? Where?

¹ i.e. birth and death. ² A metaphor borrowed from the Upanishads.
³ i.e. trace.

675. Take pitcher and tankard, heart's dearest, and bear
 Round the meads to the marge of the stream over there,
 For of many a slender-shaped, moon-visaged fair
 Hath Fortune made pitchers and tankards whilere.

676. Thou, the water of life is hidden within o' the lip of thee,
 The lip of the cup suffer not a kiss win o' the lip of thee !
 An I drink not the blood of the chalice, 'fore heav'n, I 'm no man !
 What is it that lip it should set, without sin, o' the lip of thee ?¹

¹ Addressed to the beloved.

677. Yon palace, that rivalled heaven for high and fair,
 To bow in whose gate the forehead kings wonted were,
 I saw on its pinnacles seated a cushat late,
 And ever, "Where, where?" she croodled; "where, where?
 where, where?"¹

¹ *Kow.* The cushat's note, "Coo! coo!" in Persian means, "Where? where?"; as if she said, "Where is the ancient glory? where are the kings?" etc., etc.

678. That ruby of Bedekhshan,¹ that jacinth-lipped fair, where
 is it?
 That fragrant-breathed life of the soul and charmer of care,
 where is it?
 Wine, what though they tell us, indeed, that in Islam by law 't is
 forbidden,
 Drink, drink thou and reck not of care! As for Islam, where,
 where is it ?²

¹ A province in the extreme north of Afghan Turkestan, bordering on Bokhara and enclosed between the Hindu Koosh and the Oxus, from which the finest rubies are said to have been anciently exported. "The ruby of Bedekhshan" of the text is, of course, "red wine."
² i.e. what matters Islam?

679. When wine thou drinkest, bemuddled of it be thou not;
 Outcast from reason and home of unwitting be thou not.
 Wilt have wine of rubies be lawful to thee, indeed?
 Seek no man's mischief and sanity-quit be thou not.

680. When come is the dissolution-day of thee and me,
 And out of the flesh the sheer passing away of thee and me,
 Alack, when we're both no more, from yon dome of blue
 O many's the moon will shine on the clay of thee and me!

681. That which I am I am, O Lord, by Thy decree;
 An hundred years in ease Thy grace hath fostered me;
 An hundred more I fain would sin, so I might see
 Whether's the more, my sin or Thine indulgency.

682. Thou who to Fortune's mallet e'en as the ball must be,¹
 Of Right and Wrong say nothing nor reck; believe it me,²
 He who in this imbroglio precipitated thee,
 He knoweth; ay, He knoweth; indeed, He knoweth, He.

¹ Alluding to the game of Mall, a kind of Eastern polo, familiar to readers of the "Arabian Nights." ² An obscure line. Lit. "Left eating (i.e. suffering) and right, on it speak not." The apparent meaning is, "Reck not whether thou be driven right or left (i.e. this way or that) of the mall of Fortune," or "Whether this or that thing thou dost is right or wrong," or simply, "Trouble thyself not about Right or Wrong." I prefer this latter reading.

683. Yon Sphere¹ for the ruin doth lust of thee and of me ;
 At the very dear life it doth thrust of thee and of me :
 Sit, then, on the green and drink, for 't is little long
 Ere green will spring up from the dust of thee and of me.

¹ i.e. Heaven, Fortune.

684. 'Tis we are the buyers of wine, old and new, and again,
 'Tis we are the sellers of Heaven for barleycorns twain.¹
 Dost thou ask of us whither we reckon to go after death ?
 Set wine but before us and go wheresoever thou'rt fain.

¹ Alluding to the Mohammedan legend, according to which Adam forfeited Paradise by eating a grain of corn at the devil's suggestion. The meaning is : " We wine-drinkers set no store by the promises of heaven ; we prefer to make our own heaven here below and would sell our chance of that to come for two barleycorns."

685. When soul from body's clean passed away of me and thee,
 A couple of tiles on the tombs they'll lay of me and thee ;
 Then, tiles to fashion for other folk's graves, anon
 In the mould of the potter they'll press this clay of me and thee.

686. An thou be wise, the slave of greed and lust be not ;
 Prone at the foot of vain desire, like dust, be not :
 Be quick as fire and eke as running water free ;¹
 Scattered abroad, like chaff, to every gust, be not.

¹ *Racen*, lit. running, fluid.

687. What man in the world is sin-frée ? Prithee say.
 If any sin not, how lives hé ? Prithee say.
 If Thou for ill done of me pay me with ill,
 'Twixt Thee what 's the difference and mé ? Prithee say.

688. Thine existence from all who are naught hidden look thou
 keep ;
 Thy secret from fools, before aught, hidden look thou keep :
 Consider but what thine occasion still is among men :
 From all folk thine innermost thought hidden look thou keep.

689. Thou my life and my vigour that art, I am all thee ;
 Thou my heart and my soul, soul and heart, I am all thee :
 Thou my being art grown ; thus all me thou art, whilst, become
 Non-existent in thee, art and part, I am all thee.¹

¹ I.e., the lover's being is merged in that of the beloved.

690. Quoth one to thee, heart, who bleeds for the world's chagrin :
 " O thou in the darkness that dwell'st of this house of sin,
 Knowest e'en what thou dost ? If House and Home be denied,
 Nay, get thee without, since thou mayest not enter in."¹

¹ I.e., " If to abide in peace and easance is denied thee here below, forswear
 thou the things of the world, since it is not vouchsafed thee to enjoy them."

691. When from self passeth the shining jewel away of thee
 To another sort, who in ruins the dwelling lay of thee,
 They come and go and no man indeed apprehendeth
 Whatever betideth the body under the clay of thee.¹

¹ A very obscure and probably corrupt quatrain, at the exact meaning of
 which one can only guess.

692. Thyself to unjust Fate's chagrin and dole give not;
 To grief for those gone by fore'er thy soul give not;
 Thy heart, save to some fair one's tress and mole, give not;
 Life to the wind and eke from hand the bowl give not.

693. In the lovers' assembly come sit let us all;
 Of the troubles of Fortune go quit let us all:
 Of the wine of love-longing let's all drink a cup;
 Drunk and free be, at peace, heart and wit, let us all.

694. Untroubled, O comrade, for Fortune remain;
 Nor weary thyself for Time's changes in vain;
 Life's wede on thy body once rended in twain,
 What boots said and done or undone, joy or pain?

695. Alack, for life passeth and passeth in vain!
 Every mouthful forbid, not a breath without stain!¹
 God's commands unaccomplished have blackened my face;²
 And alack, for things done which He did not ordain!

¹ Cf. the Upanishads: "At every stage, above and below, it is the same wearisome journey, miseries and tainted pleasures, that give place to new miseries, etc." ² Alluding to the Mohammedan belief that sinners will rise again with black faces.

696. On life beyond threescore security set not;
 The foot in any place, save drunk thou be, set not: ✓
 Or ever of thy skull the Fates a gugglet make,
 Pitcher from back and cup from hand of thee set not.

697. How long for greed, O friend, with worn-out body run,
Still measuring the world from rise to set of sun?
All things that come and be alike depart and go,
No moment having brought content to anyone.

698. Wine-worshippers, lovers and drinkers of it are we all;
In the street of the tavern for ever a-sit are we all:
Good and bad we've renounced, hope of Heaven and fear of hell;¹
Of us seek not reason, for drunken, to wit, are we all.

¹ The perfected sage of the Upanishads is exempt from the thought of good and evil works; he wishes for no Paradise and fears no Hell.

699. A draught of old wine than empire new is better;
All that is not the juice of the vine to eschew is better;
An hundred times better the cup than Feridoun's¹ realm and
the lid
Of the jar than the crown of Kei-khosrou² is better.

¹ The Peishdadian prince who delivered Iran from the tyranny of Zohak (*Drukkak*) and restored the Jemshidite dynasty; the Charles II of Persian history. ² Cyrus.

700. Daily thou seest us drunk evermo' y-fallen;
Idolaters bound in the tress of the foe y-fallen;
Cup from hand, turban from pate, heigho! y-fallen;
Head at thy foot in the dust laid low, y-fallen.¹

¹ *Uftadeh*, secondary sense, "become."

701. Strange this semblant of being which Thou dost afford us !
 To many a marvel Thou movest, O Lord, us !
 We cannot be better than that which Thou seest,
 Since forth of the crucible *thus* hast Thou poured us.

702. Our resolves of repentance we've broken, one and all ;
 Name-and-shame-free ourselves have we spoken, one and all :
 Blame us not if we act without judgment, indeed, for lo !
 With Love's wine we are drunk by this token, one and all.

703. Marry, with my moustache I've swept the tavern-sill ;
 I've spoken myself free of both worlds' good and ill ;
 If both worlds in the ditch, like balls, the Fates should spill,
 To me, when drunk and drowsed with wine, 't were less than nil.

704. I purpose each day, at night, of my case to repent,
 From the goblet brim-full and the loveling's embrace to repent :
 But now, that the season is here of the darling fresh rose,¹
 Of repentance, O Lord, for the nonce give me grace to repent !

¹ The sight and scent of the newly blossomed rose seem to have a peculiarly exciting effect upon the Oriental imagination. I remember reading, in some Arabic author (I think Ibn Khellikan or Ibn Khaldoun), a story of a cobbler of Baghdad (a prototype of Hans Sachs, dear to all lovers of Nuremberg and music), who, every Spring-time, as soon as the roses began to bloom, was wont to shut his shop and station himself, with flagon and cup and bowl of roses, by the wayside, where he would remain till the end of the rose-season, refusing to do any work and singing, at the top of his voice, bacchanalian ditties, with the invariable refrain of "Drink ye wine in the season of the rose, for the season of the rose is fleeting !"

705. O ye the world's case that ignore, ye are nought;
 Its foundation's the wind and therefore ye are nought:
 Life's 'twixt two non-existences set and thereon
 Your existence's cornerstones four: ye are nought.

706. Topsy-turvy yon sphere, as ye see, is befallen;
 All the wise here below are in mis'ry befallen:
 The friendship of flagon and cup still consider,
 Lip to lip, though betwixten them blood¹ be befallen.²

¹ i.e. blood-red wine.

² The connection is not apparent.

707. Soul,¹ by whose aid upreared thy horn hast thou
 That moon with face thus put to scorn hast thou?
 All other fair their faces with the Feast,
 But with thy face the Feast adornest Thou.

¹ To the beloved.

708. The world's speech hearken not; 't is but vain prate become:
 Wine seek thou and her breast who's thy heart's mate become;
 For him, to-day who left his mother's womb, to-morrow
 Upon some wench's tail thou 'lt see await become.¹

¹ The connection between the first and last lines of this quatrain is not apparent. "Man cometh from his mother, and as soon as he arriveth at years of puberty, he inclineth to the skirt of [other] women and forgetteth the maternal right."—*Luck. Comm.*

709. An elder I saw in drunken slumber sped,
 From the circle of sense of the house of the body fled;
 Wine-drunken, he'd fallen asleep with a fuddled head,
 First "God is good to His servants!" having said.

710. Why thus conceit thee for house and fine array?
 God wot, man's profit of life was a fable aye.
 The wind is thy bedmate and tapers thou kindest still!
 Thy house why build in the torrent's passage way?

711. The hand of the heart to the lock of delight never brought;
 The cup of content to the lip of the spright never brought;
 Alack, for to nightfall fast draweth the day of my life;
 One day to the wish of my heart unto night never brought!

712. Wine, light on the bosom that lies, set on my palm;
 Cup, bright as the fair one's eyes, set on my palm;
 That liquor, which, as with a chain, together entwines
 The foolish alike and the wise, set on my palm.

713. Skinker, the morning draught of the unmixed wine give thou!
 To those who are merry at heart with the juice of the vine give
 thou!
 Ruined and drunken¹ are we in the ruins of transiency²;
 Blazon thereof to the world of ruin and pine give thou!

¹ i.e. dead drunk; word-play with ² "Ruins of transiency" (syn. "tavern of fleetingness or perishability," i.e. the world) and "world of ruin."

714. Dost thou know why the Lily and Cypress for free
Reputed become in the mouths of men be ?

'T is that *this*¹ hath ten tongues,² but is silent, and *that*³
An hundred hands⁴ hath, but ungrasping is she.⁵

¹ i.e. the lily. ² "i.e. her tongue-shaped leaves."—*Soudi*. ³ i.e. the cypress. ⁴ i.e. its branches. ⁵ *Soudi* (Comm. Hafiz, ccxxx, 7) says on this subject: "The burden of a tree is its fruit and to that burden it is attached, to wit, dependent thereon; by reason whereof it is liable to be shaken and stoned; whereas the cypress, bearing no fruit, is not liable to molestation and is therefore called 'free,' i.e. from annoy and concern." Hafiz (ccxxxv, 5) says of the lily, "With ten tongues she abideth silent." The *sousen-i-asad*, "free lily," is the common *Lilium candidum*. To the best of my belief, it is to their stately and upright bearing that both the lily and the cypress really owe their popular sobriquet of "free."

715. The world to thy heart's wish sped suppose; what then ?
The book of existence read suppose; what then ?
An hundred years take it thou'st lived to thy heart's content
And an hundred more yet unfled suppose; what then ?

716. Hashish, they say, for every heart's pain is better,
Than winecup and wine, to the ghittern's strain, is better;
But one drop of wine than an hundred bang-eaters' blood,
By the adept's canon abideth plain, is better.¹

¹ Surely, a sufficiently emphatic rejection of hashish.

717. O thou that hast gone and come back, crookbacked and
pale become,

Thy name among men all lost, like dust on the gale, become,
Thy fingers together grown and hoofs, toe and nail, become,
Thy beard sprouted forth of thy breech and like to a tail become !¹

¹ "Description of an old man's case."—*Luck. Comm.*

718. Be't horses and weapons, be't turquoise or what,
Of this ten-day-long fortune conceit thou thee not !
The rigour of heaven none 'scapeth with life,
Which to-day the mug breaketh, to-morrow the pot.¹

¹ "Mug and pot, i.e. little and great folk."—*Luck. Comm.*

719. From study and lore¹ and devotion flight is best ;
To hang to the tress of the charmer the spright is best ;
Or ever the hand of fell Fortune thy heart's blood shed,
To shed the flask's blood in the goblet bright is best.

¹ i.e. of theology and divinity, the Mohammedan sciences *par excellence*.

720. Lo, rent of the wind of the East the rose's girth's become ;¹
For the loveliness of the rose the bulbul in mirth's become :
Come, drink in the shade of the rose, for many's the rose, alack !
Its petals hath shed for the wind and strewn on the earth's become.²

¹ i.e., the rose hath broken into bloom at the breath of Spring. ² Var. :
". . . . for many a time this rose Come forth from the earth and back
again in the earth's become."

721. From all that's not wine to get thee away is best ;
To drink from the hand of a Turcoman may is best :
Winebibbing, Caléndership,¹ going-astray, is best ;
From the Moon to the Fish,² one draught, by my fay, is best.

¹ *Calenderi*, i.e. (as before explained) Calender-like debauchery. ² i.e. of
all beneath the sky. "The Fish" (as before explained) is that which supports
the earth.

722. Committed our souls to the trust of the Merciful One are ;
Free from thought of transgression and care of obedience we
won are ;

For there where Thy grace, O my God, and Thy favour obtaineth,
The *done* things are as the *undone*, the *undone* as the *done* are.¹

¹ i.e., God of His mercy will look upon our ill deeds as undone and on our neglected good deeds as done.

723. The spirit's embarked on the Perilous Way¹ become ;
Quit of good and of bad is the flesh 'neath the clay become :
O many's the wayfarer passeth o'er thee and o'er me,
What while we are dust, without wit of worlds tway, become !

¹ i.e. the way of death.

724. O thou who hast ill galore, but good deeds none done,
And thus, of thy trust in the grace of the Merciful One, done,
I counsel thee, count not on pardon, for never yet
Did *undone* as *done* and *done* things become as *undone*.¹

¹ This quatrain is attributed to Abou Saïd, who was a Soufi poet ; but it may just as well be by Kheyyam, in which case it may be taken as a hit at the hypocritical pietists, who make a show of religion a cloak for all sorts of crimes and excesses.

725. O Lord, in whose service alike are all, small and great,
The best of this world and of that is to serve in whose gate,
Affliction thou takest and happiness givest ! O Lord,
Of Thy grace give and take ! Of Thy wisdom appoint us our fate !¹

¹ "i.e., appoint for us what Thou wilt ; Thou knowest what behoveth unto us."—*Luck. Comm.*

726. Of wind and of fire, of water and clay, are we ;
 Amiddleward life, in death and decay are we ;
 Whilst the body's with us, in dole and dismay are we ;
 And when it departs, lo, clean wede away are we !¹

¹ "The flowers of the forest are all *wede* away !" — *Old Border Ballad*. Mr. Child, in his admirable collection of English and Scottish Ballads, guesses the meaning of the word "wede" (which is ignored by lexicographers) at "shorn"; but this is an unlucky shot, as the word is evidently a dialectic variation (the Lowland Scottish dialect being little more than corrupt English) of A.S. *weðe*, went, although there is a scintilla of possibility in favour of its derivation from Lat. *vado*, I go. *Emma ta'ammul* (lit. "but consideration"), as the Arabs say; i.e., the point is worthy of consideration.

727. The raindrops lamented, "Cut off from the sea we are all."
 The sea laughed in answer and said: "ALL are we; we are ALL:
 No God is there other than we; in truth HE we are all;
 Each a point of the circle of Deity we are all."¹

¹ An epitome of Pantheistic doctrine. Cf. the Upanishads, TAT TWAM ASI, "That art thou," and Meister Eckhard's prescription to the ascete, *dass er Gott ausser sich selbst nicht suche*. "The souls are all one in the universal soul or deity and the differences between the soul and the deity are also fictitious; they are both one in the unity of the impersonal Self, which is that into which all things pass away, even as the ocean is the one thing into which all waters flow." — *The Upanishads*. The imagery of this quatrain is borrowed from the Vedas. It is in passages like this that Kheyyam's real opinions appear, and one such utterance outweighs all the quasi-religious ones attributed to him.

728. How long wilt thou prate of mosque, fasting and prayer?
 In the wineshop get drunk, though by begging it were!
 Drink wine, O Kheyyam, for anon of thy clay
 Pots and pitchers they'll fashion, all manner of ware.

729. With rose-coloured wine, whilst thou dwell'st in this world-hovel mean,

Still mingle thy clay, O brother of insight keen,
That so of thy dust every atom they give to the wind
Befuddled may fare to the door of the tavern e'en.

730. How long shall I fret for riches sent or not
And for life that I pass in heart's content or not ?
Fill the goblet with wine, for it's all unknown to me
This breath that I draw if I shall vent or not.

731. Ours be dawn-draught and wanton and wine, O skinker !
True repentance ¹ shall never be mine, O skinker !
Of Noah how long wilt thou whine, ² O skinker ?
Quick, bring me that heart's ease of thine, ³ O skinker !

¹ *Tauhet-i-nasoukh*, "i.e. *tauhet-i-akhalia*, pure, unadulterated repentance."
—*Luck. Comm.* Nicolas (blindly followed by Whinfield) supposes the adjective *nasoukh* to be a proper name and builds a ridiculous note on the mistake. ² i.e., how long wilt thou preach repentance to me, corroborating thine admonition with the story of Noah and the Flood? ³ i.e. wine.

732. Come, forth with that musk-scented ruby of thine, O skinker!
From contention and prate let's take refuge in wine, O skinker!
One gugglet of grape-juice come pour for me, quick, or e'er
Pots and gugglets they make of thine ashes and mine, O skinker!

733. From devotion, experience showeth, O skinker,
No profit the devotee knoweth, O skinker!
Fill the cup, quick, or ever life goeth, O skinker!
All that is from Foreordination floweth, O skinker!

734. Here's taper and flask and moonshine, O skinker!
 And sweetheart befuddled with wine, O skinker!
 Raise this heart full of fire¹ from the earth; give it not
 To the wind, but bring water² [o' the vine], O skinker!

¹ i.e. afire with chagrin. ² "Water" here used for wine (which is meant) solely for purpose of bringing in mention of all four elements.

735. A cup of yon liquid ruby give here, O skinker!
 My heart from the fire with water uprear, O skinker!
 Whilst reason the rein of my soul yet in hand hath,
 My hand to wine's skirt shall still adhere, O skinker!

736. See, blown are the flowers! The winecup fill, O skinker!
 The hand from devotion withhold thou still, O skinker!
 Ere doom lie in wait for us, come, let's enjoy for a little
 The wine ruby-red and the marge of the rill, O skinker!

737. 'Tis the hour of the morning-draught and the Cry, O skinker!
 For wine and the winesellers' street am I, O skinker!
 A truce to thy prate of devotion! Fill high, O skinker!
 Let piety go and the winecup ply, O skinker!

738. Since now 'tis the Prime and the youth of the year,¹ O
 skinker,
 Come, prithee, the winecup in hand give here, O skinker!
 'Tis the hour of the dawn-draught; I've clapped the bolt on
 the door:
 Give wine, for the sun to the rising is near, O skinker!

¹ Kheyyam here anticipates Metastasio: "O primavera, gioventù dell' anno!"

739. Those who forewent us the way of the dead, O skinker,
In the dust of delusion to sleep laid the head, O skinker!
Come, drain thou the winecup and hearken this truth from me:
Wind, nothing but wind, is all that they said, O skinker!¹

¹ Cf. Saadi: "All that I have said is vanity and wind."

740. Since doom gives quarter unto no wight, O skinker,
Come, give me the winecup in hand forthright, O skinker!
Behoveth us chew not the idle cud of sorrow
For these two or three days of existence's flight, O skinker!

741. Though based thou wert, like walls, on stone, O skinker,
Doom's torrent e'en would lay thee prone, O skinker!
Wind is the soul; sing, minstrel! fill the winecup!
The world is dust, allwhither blown, O skinker!

742. Of Ya Sîn¹ and Berât² I prithee prate not, O skinker!
On the tavern come write me a billet for scot,³ O skinker!
The day in the inn when they quarter me free of payment
Were better for me than the Night of the Lot,⁴ O skinker!⁵

¹ Chap. lxiv of Koran. ² Chap. ix of Koran. ³ *Berât*, also cheque, draft; but meaning here probably "billet" (as for quartering soldiers): v. Dozy, Suppl. aux Dict. Arabes.

⁴ *Shab-i-Berât*, the Night of the Lot, Sheban 15, on which God is fabled to register all actions to be performed during the following year.

⁵ It is hardly necessary to say that this quatrain turns upon the various meanings (i.e. name of Koran-chapter, billet and Lot) of *Berât*.

743. Blithe and fair is the morn; skinker, up! With the rest
 Of our yesternight's liquor the flagon invest:
 With the Friend let us drink and make merry to-day,
 For to-morrow's a froward¹ companion at best.

¹ 'Acc, disobedient, disloyal, rebellious. *Luck. Comm.* unaccountably says, " 'Acc means 'being or setting free,'" apparently mistaking it for 'itac, which has that meaning and which, as written in *Talle* (the Persian current hand, in which books are for the most part lithographed), is not unlike 'acc.

744. From yon gugglet of wine, wherein no impurities be,
 A cup fill and drink and give thou another to me,
 Or ever, O fair, in the pathway of destiny,
 Some potter make pots of the ashes of me and thee.

745. Forth, forth with the wine of the tulip's hue, O skinker!
 From the throat of the flagon draw blood anew, O skinker!
 For, saving the winecup, there's not to-day for me
 One friend that is pure of heart and true, O skinker!

746. If to thy hand aught falleth of double-pottle wine,¹
 Drink thou in all assemblies, profane and eke divine;
 For whoso on this fashion dealeth from all concern
 Of such as thy moustaches is free and beards like mine.

¹ "Double-pottle wine," i.e. wine which has been reduced, by boiling, to half its original quantity and is therefore of double strength; two pottles reduced to one. Kheyyam evidently, if he wanted but little here below, wanted that little strong.

747. There's a point whereanent I am ever in doubt and stress,
 Why folk for intoxication to blame me profess:
 Would God all ill actions intoxication produced,
 So ne'er in this world I might look on soberness!

748. In the tavern of feigning beware lest thou come,
 Nor in pietist-fashions a dealer become:
 This way is the way of the stiff-neckèd folk:
 Beware lest thou venture the foot in this slum.¹

¹ A warning against false devotees and dervishes.

749. If a pestle of mutton there fall to thy lot
 And two pottles of wine and a loaf in some grot,
 With a tulip-cheeked fair, by the side of a stream,
 'Tis a life that to every king's portion falls not.

750. At the shop of a potter I halted in thought;
 The master at work, foot on treadle, I caught:
 From the foot of the beggar and head of the king
 Lids and handles for tankards and gugglets he wrought.

751. Thou, whose essence no reason to fathom is fit,
 Of our sin and obedience alike who art quit,
 If with sin I am drunken, I'm sober with hope;
 Of Thy mercy, O Lord, I despair not, to wit.¹

¹ *Y'sei*, "that is, to wit"; the actual rhyme-ending.

752. Of live and dead Maker and sole Arbitrator art Thou;
 Of yon Sphere, the distracted, the One Regulator art Thou.
 If I'm bad who's to blame? I'm the slave; the Dictator art
 Thou:
 Where's the fault of the creature, since, Lord, the Creator art
 Thou?

753. O Fortune, my heart still discontent thou makest;
 The shirt of my joyance in sunder y-rent thou makest;
 The air me that fanneth to fire and the water I drink
 To dust in my mouth, incontinent, thou makest.

754. Take heart, for THEY settled the fate of thee yesterday¹;
 From thy protests and clamours, indeed, THEY were free
 yesterday;²
 Live blithe, for, without thy conformity,³ yesterday,
 THEY 'stablished thy lot for all morrows-to-be, yesterday.

¹ i.e. in Eternity-without-beginning. ² i.e., Fate and Fortune fore-
 ordained were not troubled with thy protestations, when they settled thy
 future lot, seeing thou didst not yet exist. ³ *Trados*, ordinary meaning,
 "dunning, importunity"; but here used in the sense of "conformity, mutual
 accord and agreement upon a certain thing, the conclusion of a treaty or
 compact between two parties," a rare sense which is overlooked by all the
 dictionaries, except Dozy's Supplement, which quotes it on the authority of the
 geographer El Beladsori.

755. My ewer of wine Thou hast broken in three, O Lord !
 The door of liesse Thou hast shut upon me, O Lord !
 'T is we that drink wine and Thou that mak'st free, O Lord !
 Deuce take it, 't is Thou that art drunk, not we, O Lord !¹

¹ This quatrain is said to have been composed on the occasion of the over-turning and breaking, by a sudden gust of wind, of the poet's wine-pitcher, as he sat carousing *al fresco*. The reading of ll. 3 and 4 given by all the Texts is as follows : " On the dust Thou hast cast my rose-coloured wine ; I am not drunk, I ; belike Thou art drunk, O Lord ! " The variant I have adopted is taken from the marginal gloss of the *Lucknow Commentator*, who commends it to " people of taste." It is probably the correct reading.

756. O heart, since thou sat'st at the banquet of yonder fair,
 Thyself thou hast severed from self and joined to her :
 Since thou drank'st of Annihilation's cup, thou 'rt free
 Of existence and non-existence and both worlds' care.¹

¹ The self-effacement of the true lover, the merger of self in the beloved. The quatrain may also be read in a Vedantic sense. " In liberation, by the knowledge of the Self, is perfect satisfaction and exemption from all fear and all desire, and all differences vanish in the unitary indifference of the Self "—Gough's *Upanishada*.

757. Whiles, hiding Thyself, Thy face Thou showest to none
 And whiles Thou appearest in all things under the sun :
 Thyself to Thyself Thou manifestest, for Thou
 Art object of vision and vision's self in one.¹

¹ Another Vedantic quatrain. " The undifferented Self is both Subject and Object in one."

758. Yestereven the mug on the stones I did strike
 (I was drunk when I did this unmannerly trick).
 To me' quoth the mug with the tongue of the case :
 "I was once like to thee ; thou wilt yet be my like."

759. O heart, if clean from the body's lust thou be,
 A spirit in Heaven, unbodied, must thou be ;
 The empyrean¹'s thy country and shame on thee
 That the native become of this realm of dust thou be !

¹ 'Ereik, the heaven of the throne, i.e. the highest heaven, that of pure fire.

760. For the sake of the lust of the senses for ever
 The high soul thou frettest with idle endeavour ;
 Know'st thou not that the pest of the soul's the desires
 Whose bondage nowise thou availest to sever ?

761. A sheikh to a strumpet said : " Drunk again art thou ;
 Each moment in some fresh snare foot-ta'en art thou ! "
 " Nay, all that thou sayest I am," quoth she ; " but thou,
 All that which, O elder, to be thou dost feign art thou ? "

762. The world-kitchen's smoke how long, O soul, wilt thou eat ?
 Of " Been " and " Unbeen " how long the dole wilt thou eat ?
 The world to the folk of the world¹ is a weariful loss :
 The loss if thou leave, the gain of the whole wilt thou eat.²

¹ Variant, " The folk of the faith."

² i.e. enjoy, possess.

763. Look what thou dost, O potter, an thou be prudent ! Nay,
How long wilt thou this fashion do outrage on men's clay ?
The hand of Feridoun, ay, and the head of Kei
Upon the wheel Thou settest ! Of what, then, think'st thou, pray ?

764. 'Tis the hour of the dawn-draught, O fair-fortuned may !
Quick, a song and the winecup withouten delay !
For this coming of *Tir* and departure of *Dei* ¹
Many a Jem to earth casteth and many a Kei ! ²

¹ *Tir* and *Dei*, the old names of the fourth and tenth solar months ; here meaning the alternation of Winter and Spring. ² I.e., the passage of the seasons and the lapse of time destroy the greatest of mankind.

765. In what quarter soever I look, everywhere,
Lo, Paradise green and rill Kauthir are there !
Of Hell, since the world is grown Heaven, speak ne'er ;
In Paradise sit with an angel-faced fair. ¹

¹ A quatrain of the advent of the Spring.

766. Albeit nought go to the wish of thy heart,
For this moment thou livest, take life in good part :
Since the soul of all myst'ries, O youngling, thou art, ¹
Of all this vain-grieving why suffer the smart ?

¹ *Wachiyi*, "thou art the essence or soul" (var. *wachiffi*, "thou art aware"), Vedantic "That art thou"; I.e., thou art the Self, the one thing that has any real existence.

767. If without wine and skinker, what while thou a penny
 In hand hast, a moment thou pass, thou'rt a zany :
 Since, ere my time and thy time, this lesson learnt many,
 Dame Fortune intendeth no kindness to any.

768. O Fortune, exultant in that thou hast done,
 In the church of oppression still-worshipping one,
 To the base thou giv'st wealth, to the worthy chagrin,
 And without these two sorts, pearl or potsherd, there's none.

769. Beware! Whilst thou mayest, O fair, awhile,
 Look the hearts of thy lovers thou spare awhile ;
 For this queendom of beauty abideth not aye ;
 From thy hand it will go all at once ere a while.

770. I spake, thou spakest: heart gave I thee, thou me disdain.
 I take, thou takest,—thou heart from me, I from thee pain.
 I am, thou art, too,—thou merry and I for thee sad.
 I make, thou makest,—thou wrong and I patience in vain.¹

¹ A quatrain without literary merit, but remarkable for its curious rhyme-form. Note the double rhymes at the commencement of the three rhyming lines.

771. Examine thyself and think, if thou'rt wise eno',
 What here thou broughtest and what thou wilt take herefro':
 How say'st thou, "I'll drink no wine, for needs must I die"?
 Nay, needs must thou die, wine whether thou drink or no.

772. A graybeard late at a taverner's house I did see;
 "Hast no tidings," quoth I, "of those who are gone to give me?"¹
 "Drink wine," he answered; "for many such as we
 Have gone, that never came back again to be."

¹ As if assuming, from his ancient appearance, that he had been to the other world and come back?

773. By the potter's shop yonder I passed t' other day;
 At his clay he was hewing and pounding away:
 I see (if the dullard perceive it not) aye
 In the hand of each potter my forefather's clay.¹

¹ "i.e. that of Adam."—*Luck. Comm.*

774. Take tankard and cup, Heart's-ease; with thy graceful air,
 To the flowery mead by the marge of the streamlet fare;
 For tankards and pitchers an hundred times whilere
 Hath Fortune fashioned of many a moon-faced fair.

775. O thou who the product of Four¹ and of Seven² art,³
 Who forever a-fret over these things eleven art,
 Drink wine, for I've told thee a thousand times o'er,
 Once gone, gone thou, whether to Hell or to Heaven, art.

¹ i.e. the Four Elements. ² The Seven Planets or Heavens. ³ i.e. Man.

776. Glad, glad is thy coming, O joy of my spright that¹ thou art!
 Thou 'rt come and withal I'm not certified quite that¹ thou art.
 For God's sake, I prithee, if not for the sake of my heart,
 Drink wine on such sort that I know not aright that¹ thou art!

¹ "That" throughout may be read "who."

777. O delectable wine, a spell in the bowl thou layest !
 In fetters the feet of the reason wit-whole thou layest !
 To who of thee drinketh quarter on no wise thou givest
 Till open to view the pearl of his soul ¹ thou layest ! ²

¹ i.e. his secret soul.

² *In vino veritas.*

778. Lord, ope me a door,¹ for the Door-open-thrower art Thou !
 Yea, show me a way, for the Guide, the Way-shower art Thou !
 No hand in my stress to other hand-takers I'll give ; ²
 All fleeting are they ; the Eternal Bestower art Thou !

¹ i.e. of subsistence.
 any mortal helper.

² i.e., I will not stretch out my hand for aid to

779. The pathway of witlessness¹ choose, an if thou have wit ;
 Wine drink at their hands who are drunk with the Infinite :
 Art witless ? Then witlessness, sure, is none of thy case : ²
 For not unto all who are witless accorded is it.

¹ *Bilakshari*, lit. ignorance, witlessness ; here, *mystic*, it means the state of ecstatic objectivation, abstraction from self and absorption in the Oversoul, which it is the aim of the theosophist to attain. ² i.e., if thou be a fool, "witlessness" is not for thee.

780. O Sphere, to each churl a portion of gear thou givest,
 Houses and wealth and favour and cheer thou givest !
 Instead of yon idle losels who set up shop,¹
 'T were well if to us of all this, O Sphere, thou givest !

¹ Literal.

781. O Sphere, to all losels somewhat of cheer thou givest,
 Bath-houses, mills and watering-gear thou givest;
 Whilst the true man must pawn his good for the evenbread.
 Behoveth a crack¹ for such a sphere thou givest !²

¹ *Crepitum ventris*.
 A variant of No. 780.

² i.e., it behoveth thee express contempt for it.

782. Away with vain-grieving ! In glee live thou
 And leal, in this world of dislealty, live thou :
 Since the goods of the world all, in fine, nothing are,
 Think that thou too art nothing¹ and free² live thou.

¹ i.e. existest not.

² i.e. free of concern and dependence on the world.

783. How come grapes, in the garth that are sour, when they're
 green,
 To wax sweet, and then bitter, when wine made they've been ?
 If from wood with an adze one would make a rebeck
 And it turn out a flute, what thereof wouldst thou ween ?¹

¹ Implying that the Creator does not know what He is about and that He sets out to make one thing and turns out another at a venture, so that Creation generally is, as Goethe's Wagner (Second Part of "Faust") says, an "eitel Possen."

784. Lord, open Thou on me a door of daily bread !
 Without recourse to men, let me of Thee be fed !
 Hold Thou me drunk with wine on such a sort that I
 May for unconsciousness escape an aching head !¹

¹ *Derd-i-ser*, syn. trouble, chagrin, vexation.

785. If coming¹ rested with me, come had I? No, forsooth.
 Were going hence² at my will, how should I go, forsooth?
 Were it not best of all that into this ruinous world
 Come had I neither gone nor been evermo', forsooth?

¹ i.e. into life.

² i.e. from life.

786. To the word of the puzzle, O heart, soon or late thou
 attain'st not;
 To the problem that's baffled the wise of old date thou
 attain'st not:
 A heav'n, then, with winecup and wanton, here make for thyself,
 For to Heaven up there thou attain'st or (please Fate) thou
 attain'st not.

787. The foundations of Life fast established for e'er wilt
 thou find?
 The heart for awhile, in this world, without care wilt thou find?
 No moment sit idle from drinking of wine new and old;
 So, trust me, thy life ever pleasant and fair wilt thou find.

788. Say, what have I done to thee, O Fortune base,
 That me without ceasing thou castest in evil case?
 Thou giv'st me no bread but thou driv'st me from place to place,
 Nor water except for the water of my face!¹

¹ i.e. at the expense of my honour: see note to Q. 360.

789. Beware thou the toper molest not neither defame
 And eke with the worthy¹ thou fall not in evil name;
 Drink wine, for on nowise, for drinking or not of wine,
 To Heaven shalt thou win, if thou'rt fated to feed Hell-flame.

¹ "The worthy" in Khayyam's idea are synonymous with "the toper,"
 i.e. "the élite of mankind."

790. Of all accepted, both old and new, wilt thou be?
 Alike of the many well seen and the few wilt thou be?
 Speak evil of no one and ever in good repute
 With true-believer and Gueber and Jew wilt thou be!¹

¹ A superficial maxim of *Weltweisheit*, which in no way expresses the real mind of Khayyam, who radically despised the good opinion of the general. It is probably ironical.

791. The day that my heart grown water for e'er thou wilt find,¹
 Full many a wrack in its corners bare thou wilt find:
 In the sea of my eye if thou venture the plunge to take,
 Excepting thou perish, a merman² there thou wilt find.

¹ I.e., when I am dead or perhaps, simply, when I have wept away all the blood of my heart and it is replaced by tears. ² i.e. the apple of the eye, called by the Persians "the man or mannikin of the eye."

792. O noble new wine, incomparable beverage mine,
 Of thee, in cold blood, I will drink, O juice of the vine,
 So much and so often that whoso espies me afar
 Shall say, "Ho! whence comest, O thou that hast drunken wine?"

793. O must undilute, O crystal-like¹ juice of the vine,
Of thee I will drink, in this reckless distraction of mine,
So much and so often that all who espy me far off
Shall incontinent say, "Whence comest thou, Seignior Wine?"

¹ *Alina*, lit. "dark-green," sec. meaning, glassy, i.e. crystalline. See ante, Quatrain 335. Apropos of the Oriental use of colour-names, dark-green things, such as grass and trees, are commonly called "black" by the Arabs; e.g., a certain cultivated district of Irac is called *Samad*, blackness, because the Arabs of the desert, at first sight of its verdure, are said to have exclaimed, "What is this *samad* (blackness)?" Per contra, black things, e.g. a horse's hoof, are called green. This quatrain is a variant of No. 792.

794. Resign thee to pain and contentedly live thou;
From the bondage of greed and ambition free live thou;
Advancement seek not and chew not the cud of chagrin;
Rely not on less than thyself¹ and in glee live thou.

¹ i.e. on the unworthy.

795. There came an unclean chuff out of a convent cell,
Upon his back a shirt as of the smoke of hell:
My jug of wine he smashed (may his life fail!) and then
"A man [saved] and a maund [destroyed]!" quoth he; "'t is well."¹

¹ This last line is enigmatical in the original; it runs thus, literally: "[He said] that" (redundant) "A man and a maund (*mann*)."¹ The meaning may be "every man his maund!" i.e. "Let every man do as I do and destroy a maund of wine!" The *mann* (maund) referred to by Kheyyam is apparently not the modern Persian *mann*, which is a measure or weight of from 7½ to 30 lbs., according to locality, but in all probability the smaller Arabic *manna* = about 2 lbs. I have generally rendered *mann* by "pottle." The "unclean chuff" of the quatrain was apparently one of the amateur "zealots" who thought to show their zeal by supplementing or forestalling the Mohtesib in the exercise of his official duty (always avertable by bribery) of preventing the public, and even private, consumption of wine, as contrary to the Mohammedan law.

796. That which thou say'st to me all, of despite, perdie, thou say'st !

"Infidel ! atheist !" still, "out upon thee !" thou say'st.

All that I am I confess ; but thou, tell the truth, man, for once ;
Is it *thine* office to say that which to me thou say'st ?¹

¹ Apparently addressed to some especially troublesome zelator.

797. With the passing of Winter and coming of Spring, line by line,
Page by page, close the leaves of this life-scroll of thine and mine :
Drink wine, then, nor sorrow ; for poison (the sage hath said)
Are the cares of the world and their antidote is wine.

798. Whilst yet in thy body are bone and sinew and vein,
Let thy feet overpass not their heaven-appointed domain :
Bow the neck not, though Rustem-i-Zal be the foeman, nor wear,
Though Hatim-et-Tai be the patron, beholdenment's chain.¹

¹ I.e., Cringe not to any, though he be as puissant as the legendary hero Rustem, son of Zal, the Persian Hercules, and accept not obligation from any, though he be as generous as Hatim-et-Tai, the Oriental type of romantic liberality. See my *Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night*, iii, 316.

799. The face of the world all peopled to be if thou mad'st,
'T were less than one heart to flutter with glee if thou mad'st :
One freeman enslaved with kindness to thee if thou mad'st,
'T were better by far than a thousand slaves free if thou mad'st.

800. They say, "Drink not wine, or a prey to God's ire thou shalt be ;

On the Day of Requital the food of Hellfire thou shalt be."

'Tis maybe as they tell us, but better than this world and that
Is the moment when merry with liquor and lyre thou shalt be.

801. Pride and greed in thy heart suffer not to abide,

For to aught none attaineth who's hampered with pride :

Like the tress of the fair, flexibility¹ use,

Ere Life's woof from the warp of the senses divide.²

¹ *Shikestagi*, lit. "brokenness," but trop. "flexibility, yieldingness," also, as applied to hair, "state of being curled." ² A Vedantic metaphor.

802. How long wilt aggrieved for Fortune's repine thou be,

With heart full of blood and eye full of brine thou be ?

Drink wine, then, and study to live contented and blithe,

Or ever cast out from Life's circle, in fine, thou be.

803. This world's but a breath¹ and a breath, indeed, in it am I.

Such breaths as thou may'st, then, draw therein before thou die.

For life in thanksgiving, be blithe, for yonder sorry Sphere²

Did never yet fast abide with any, low or high.

¹ "Breath," syn. "moment" throughout.

² Fortune.

804. Not a brick will I lay,¹ but my foot on the brick² of the jar
I'll set! Wine and I henceforward inseparate are.

No more with chagrin will I burn for each trifle! Far, far
From me be it life to the last with vexation to mar!

¹ i.e., "I will found no building (such as fountains, oratories, hospices, divinity-schools, etc.) for pious uses"; a favourite form of benefaction with the pious or would-seem pious; hence, met. for "I will sunder myself from the practice of piety." ² *K'āiāt*, meaning both "brick" and "tile"; i.e., "I will take my stand by wine."

805. Drink wine, for the wine-sweat in winter roll free
Down the brows of the wits of the world thou may'st see:¹
Say no longer, "Thy vow² thou hast broken!" Hark ye!
Than one flask broke better a thousand vows be!

¹ i.e., so much and so freely is wine drunk by the great spirits of the world that even in winter thou mayest see their faces all a-shine with the perspiration produced by copious drinking. ² i.e. of repentance.

806. Except in the track of the Monks of the Tavern¹ prick not!
Save winecup and dance and music and loveling seek not!
Set goblet from palm and pitcher from shoulder eke not!
Drink wine, then, and nonsense e'ermore on the matter speak not!

¹ i.e. the devotees of debauchery.

807. For the winecup and ruby lips thou'rt ever in lust and greed,
Still following hard on the sound of tabor and harp and reed!
All these but futilities are; except from the world thou be freed
And the bonds that attach thee to life, God knoweth thou'rt
nought indeed!¹

¹ Cf. Hafiz, xxxii, 2: "I am the slave of his magnanimity who, under the azure dome [of heaven], is free from whatsoever taketh the colour of attachment [to things mundane]." A Vedantic quatrain.

808. With the chalice of Destiny drunken or e'er thou be,
 Or e'er by the buffets of Doom laid bare thou be,
 For the thitherward journey provide thee here below,
 For ill wilt thou fare, empty-handed if *there* thou¹ be.

¹ I.e. in the next world. The *Lucknow Commentator* reads the quatrain as exhorting to the acquisition of honour and repute which shall preserve the memory after death.

809. O thou,¹ who 'rt the compend of earth, fire, heaven and sea,
 A word from the world of the spirit hearken to me :
 Demon and angel and beast and man in thee
 Are mingled and so thou art *all* thou seemest to be.

¹ I.e. Man.

810. However distressed for ill-fortune and wan-desire thou be,
 However oppressed by the Sphere and its cruelties dire thou be,
 Beware that on nowise thou suffer, when poured by the hand
 of the base,

A drop of cold water to moisten thy lip, though afire thou be.¹

¹ I.e., let no extremity induce thee to lay thyself under obligation to the unworthy.

811. 'Tis best with the winecup glad the heart in thee thou make,
 That little account of Past and Yet-to-be thou make
 And this prisoner-soul, that pines in its borrowed raiment of flesh,
 A moment or two from the bonds of reason free thou make !

812. Submit thee to pain, if remedy thou'dst find ;
 Chafe not at duress, if means to win free thou'dst find :
 In season of scarcity render thou thanks to God,
 Provision again if assured unto thee thou'dst find.

813. Since erst Thy familiar and intimate madest me Thou,
 From Thee why thereafter thus separate madest me Thou ?
 Since me Thou abandonedst not in the first of th' affair,
 Why *here*¹ thus distraught and disconsolate madest me Thou ?²

¹ i.e. in this base world.

² Complaint of the soul to the Divinity.

814. In the Book of Life¹ I was casting, a lot to see,
 When sudden quoth one, from a heart full of ecstasy :
 "O happy a man in this world, when at home in hand
 A face like a moon² and a night like a year hath he !"³

¹ Var. "Love."

² Var. "a day like a month."

³ According to the *Lucknow Commentator*, it was a chance passage from the [imaginary] book Kheyyam was consulting, after the fashion of the *Sortes Virgilianae*, that spoke thus "with the tongue of the case," as answering his enquiry, to the effect that the best of earthly lots is the possession of a fair mistress.

815. Of the goods of the world what thou eatest and drinkest,
 Excusable 't is if thereafter thou swinkest :
 All else is but idle adornment ; beware
 Lest dear life for such fripp'ry to barter thou thinkest.¹

¹ i.e., Beyond the bare necessities of life, the goods of the world are unworthy of the sage's endeavour.

816. With all that thou wilt I'll dispense, but with wine never! -
 All else I'd forswear, but the juice of the vine never!
 Could I ever resign me a Muslim to turn and abandon
 The use of the Magians' liquor divine? Never!

817. Have patience, since under yon Sphere without worth
 thou art;
 Drink, since in this world full of sorrow and dearth thou art:
 Since thy first and thy last but a scantling of dust is at best,
 Think that not *on* the earth, nay, but *under* the earth thou art.

818. In *this* if thou settest the joy of thy heart,
 That thou mak'st souls at ease with affliction to smart,
 Go, mourn for thy wit all the days of thy life;
 Take and bear thy deserts, for a rare fool thou art!

819. Dost thou know why the cock, at the hour when dawn
 whitens the sky,
 Still moment by moment raiseth his warning cry?
 'Tis but to show forth to thy sight, by the mirror of morn,
 That a night of thy life (and thou all unheeding) 's gone by.

820. Ah would that a restplace from striving there were!
 That a way at Thy door of arriving there were!
 Would that, after long ages, for us from Earth's breast
 A hope, like the grass, of reviving there were!

821. Thou whose fathers and forbears of every degree
 Have been burnt and thyself, too, Hell's fuel wilt be,¹
 How long "God on Omar have mercy!" wilt say?
 Who'rt *thou*, pray, that God should learn mercy from thee?²

¹ i.e. "O trebly accursed one!" It is a commonplace of vulgar abuse in Persia to call a man "the son of a burnt father!"; i.e. one whose ancestors are in hell. ² Apparently addressed to the poet's old enemies, the pietists.

822. An hundred thousand snares my path within Thou settest
 And "Thee," quoth Thou, "I'll slay, if foot therein thou settest."¹
 'T is Thou that sett'st the snares; and whoso in them falleth
 Thou slay'st and on his name the brand of sin Thou settest!²

¹ Var. of ll. 1 and 2: "The world no jot is free from Thy commandment: Thou makest Thy law and on my name," etc. ² i.e., Everything that happens is a consequence of Thy decreeing and foreordination; yet Thou brandest us as sinners and punishest us for doing that which Thou Thyself hast foreappointed to us.

823. If the need of the world but in imitation¹ were
 The days all festivals, each in its station, were;²
 Each mortal would clap his hand on his heart's desire,
 An't not for yon plaguy threats of damnation were.

¹ *Ta'lid*, "a man's following and imitating another, believing him right in what he says and does, without enquiry or examination."—*Lane*. ² Meaning, apparently, that, if all that is necessary were to act upon authority, without troubling oneself with enquiry or examination (e.g. as a devout Catholic reposes in peace upon the doctrine of Papal Infallibility, a similar course to which Tolstol recommends as the only anodyne for the miseries of life), life would be an easy matter; but alas! such a course is only practicable for "the uncooked."

824. O rose, yon heart-ravisher's visage divine thou resemblest;
That soul-gladdening ruby,¹ [her lip,] O wine, thou resemblest:
O Fortune unkind, every moment to me thou art stranger
And yet yon capricious familiar of mine thou resemblest!²

¹ *L'al-i-janfisa*, an allusion to *musferrih-i-l'al*, lit. "ruby exhilarator," an electuary compounded with rubies and said to produce exhilaration, the comparison of which to the beloved's lip is a commonplace with Persian poets.
² Lit. "thou resemblest the Friend"; i.e., thy capriciousness reminds me of the beloved.

825. Vex not the heart of the folk with chagrin anight,
Lest they cry out to God for help 'gainst thy sin anight:
In riches and beauty trust not; for *those*¹ do the Fates
In a night bear away and *this*² none the less in a night!³

¹ i.e. riches. ² i.e. beauty. ³ i.e. both wealth and beauty may vanish in a night.

826. O heart, wine and wench in the garden ensue;
From dissembling bide free nor hypocrisy do:
If Mohammed thou follow, lo, wine shalt thou drink
From that fount¹ the Accepted² is skinker unto.

¹ *H'hands*, lit. "cistern"; i.e. Kauthir, which some authorities make a cistern or reservoir, instead of a stream. ² *Murtada*, epithet of the Prophet's son-in-law, the martyr Ali, who is fabled to be invested with the office of guardian of the sacred stream and dispenser of nectar therefrom.

827. Up, up from yon sleeping-place of thine, O skinker!
Bring, bring of the unmixed juice of the vine, O skinker!
Or e'er of the bowl of our heads¹ they fashion gugglets,
From the gugglet into the bowl pour wine, O skinker!

¹ i.e., as before explained, the skull.

828. My heart for dissembling sick and in sorry case is ;
 Bring wine, quick, skinker ; for wine chagrin effaces !
 Prayer-rug and doctor's hood ¹ go pawn for liquor,
 So haply my vaunts may rest on a firmer basis.

¹ *Distress*.

829. A gugglet of wine and a book of poesy,
 The half of a loaf of bread and a penny fee,¹
 And I in a nook of some ruin ² seated with thee,
 Were better than king on a kingdom's throne to be.

¹ *Sadd-i-remaz*, lit. the stay of, that which arrests, the last breath ; i.e. a bare pittance of subsistence, enough to keep body and soul together, exactly rendered by O.E. "penny fee." ² It may be noted that the preference shown by Kheyyam and toppers of his kidney for ruins as carousing-places had its root in the fact that there they were secure from observation and interruption at the hands of the common people, the latter generally believing such places to be haunted by the spirits of the ancient kings, priests and heroes who had once inhabited them, and therefore giving them a wide berth.

830. How long this talk of the Five and the Four,¹ O skinker ?
 Since puzzles there be, what's one or more, O skinker ?
 Earth are we all ; the ghittern smite, O skinker !
 Wind are we all ; set wine before, O skinker !

¹ i.e. the Five Senses and Four Elements ; the problems of creation.

831. Harkye, friends in this world-house of jugglery seek not ;
 Resign thee to suffer and remedy seek not :
 Hear this counsel from me and again of it speak not ;
 In sorrow sit merry and sympathy seek not.

832. In hand give wine of the Redbud's hue, O skinker !
 My life's at the lip for grief and grue, O skinker !
 Give wine, so my senses awhile I may doff and so
 From Time and myself escape anew, O skinker !

833. Two saws the quintessence of wisdom I rate,
 More than all their insipid traditional prate :
 Better eat not at all than of everything eat ;
 Better live by oneself than with everyone mate.¹

¹ Cf. Schopenhauer's "Einsamkeit ist das Loos aller hervorragenden Geister" and "In der Welt nur die Wahl giebt zwischen Einsamkeit und Gemeinheit."

834. Come, forth with that liquid ruby of thine, O skinker !
 Bid my soul like the gem's self kindle and shine, O skinker !
 On my palm set the goblet heavy with wine, O skinker !
 So withal I may quicken this spirit of mine, O skinker !

835. Though in wisdom Aristo¹ thou be or Jemhour,²
 In puissance though Kaiser thou be or Feghfour,³
 Quaff Jem's cup,⁴ for the grave is the end of the tale ;
 Though Behram thou be, yet thy goal is the *Gour*.⁵

¹ Persian form of Aristotle. ² Corrupted form of name of Buzurjimihr, a celebrated sage of the sixth century and vizier to the great Sasanian king, Anoushirwan, in whose reign Mohammed was born. His name is a synonym for wisdom with the Persians, as is that of Asaf ben Berkhiya, the vizier of Solomon, with the Arabs. ³ Generic name of the Emperor of China, as Kaiser (Caesar) of the Emperors of the East. ⁴ i.e. wine. ⁵ *Gour*,

i.e. tomb ; see ante, Quatrain 205.

836. From minstrel and winecup, O king, and company fair
 How should a man like myself in the rose-time forbear?
 Nay, better than Heaven and Houris and Kauthir is
 A garden, a hanap of wine and a ghittern-player!

¹ App. addressed to some prince who had, as was periodically the case, forbidden the drinking of wine in a fit of remorse or at the instance of the orthodox party. It would, however, be quite in keeping with the usages of Persian poetry if the person addressed were simply the cupbearer.

837. If the World-All, what while I am drunken and drowsed
 with wine,
 Should roll in the ditch, like a ball, 't were no matter of mine:
 In the tavern, last night, they held me in pawn for my scot
 And the taverner muttered, "Fore heaven, the pledge is fine!"

838. In the city renowned an thou be, thou'rt the worst of
 mankind;
 If a sitter in corners¹ thou be, thou'rt not right in thy mind:²
 Though Elias or Khizr thou be, nay, no better thou'lt find;
 I rede thee, to know and be known unto none be resigned.

¹ i.e. 'an ascete, one abstracted from the world, a philosopher. ² Cf. the Kathopanishad (Comm.): "As the philosopher forgets human interests and is rapt in the Divine, the many think that he is beside himself and check him; they fail to see that he is inspired."

839. Were I given my choice, unordered and unforbad,
 Unhindered by cark of foreordinance, good or bad,
 'T were better that into this workshop of Life and Death¹
 Nor come neither been nor departed hence I had!

¹ i.e. the world.

840. Nor ableness have I to strive thine enjoyment to win
 Nor without thee to breathe can I find it my heart within ;
 No, nor courage my trouble to utter to friend or kin.
 O difficult case ! O rare passion ! O strange chagrin !

841. Would God the world other fashion than this we see would
 make

And presently, so I might see it, to wit, how He would make !
 Yea, either increase of provision would He for me would make
 Or away with my name from the bede-roll of those that be would
 make !

842. Mankind as a gugglet is and the soul as wine ;
 The body's a pipe, wherein is a voice Divine :
 Nay, knowest thou truly what earthly man is, Kheyyam ?
 A Chinese lantern, wherein is a lamp a-shine.

843. Since that my kind especial knoweth the skinker,
 An hundred bolts¹ of all sorts [on me] draweth the skinker :
 Whenas I flag,² lo ! wine, on her own account,³ until
 She bringeth me back to myself bestoweth the skinker.⁴

¹ Var. "separations, distinctions" (*feral*). ² Or "lag behind, hesitate."

³ Or "in her own fashion." ⁴ An unintelligible quatrain, which I include only for completeness' sake. Mr. Whinfield says that it is "a play on terms of logic"; but I do not think so.

844. How long wilt thou say, "The grace of God uneath,
to wit, is"?

And of repentance e'en that which thou knowest no whit is?

In fine, however much sugar and lip¹ be sweetest,

When it behoveth repent,² un-Musulmánish it is.³

¹ App. meaning "erotic pleasure."

² Lit. "When it is possible to

repent." ³ Lit., "It is not Musulmanhood" or "He is not a Musulman."

A very doubtful quatrain, which I include only for completeness' sake.

845. O thou who hast gone and left thy grief in the spright
abidden,

Like the fire of a caravan in its camping-site abidden,

That which is gone from the eye goeth of wont from the heart;

But thou, thou art still in the heart, though gone from the sight,
abidden!

THE END.

MR. PAYNE'S WORKS.

1. THE MASQUE OF SHADOWS AND OTHER POEMS.
2. INTAGLIOS: SONNETS.
3. SONGS OF LIFE AND DEATH.
4. LAUTREC: A POEM.
5. NEW POEMS.

TRANSLATIONS.

6. THE POEMS OF MASTER FRANÇOIS VILLON OF PARIS.
7. THE BOOK OF THE THOUSAND NIGHTS AND ONE NIGHT.
Now first done into English Prose and Verse from the original Arabic.
Nine Vols.
8. TALES FROM THE ARABIC. Three Vols.
9. THE DECAMERON OF GIOVANNI BOCCACCI (IL BOCCACCIO). Now first completely Englished from the original Italian. Three Vols.
10. ALAEDDIN AND THE ENCHANTED LAMP; ZEIN UL ASNAM AND THE KING OF THE JINN. Two Stories from the newly discovered Arabic Text.
11. THE NOVELS OF MATTEO BANDELLO, BISHOP OF AGEN.
Now first done into English Prose and Verse. Six Vols.

IN PREPARATION.

THE POEMS OF SHEMSEDDIN MOHAMMED HAFIZ OF SHIRAZ
(Prince of Persian Poets), now first completely done into English
Prose and Verse from the original Persian, in accordance with the
(Turkish) Commentary of Soudi, by JOHN PAYNE.

*N.B.—The right of reproduction and republication of all the books issued
by the Villon Society is strictly reserved and all infringements will be
prosecuted.*

Villon Society.

THE QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM, THE
ASTRONOMER-POET OF PERSIA, NOW FIRST COM-
PLETELY DONE INTO ENGLISH VERSE, IN THE
ORIGINAL FORMS, by JOHN PAYNE, Author of "The
Masque of Shadows," etc., etc., and Translator of "The
Poems of François Villon," "The Book of the Thousand
Nights and One Night," etc., etc.

No complete or adequate translation of the Rubaiyat or Quatrains of the great poet of twelfth century Persia has yet appeared. Mr. Fitzgerald's elegant paraphrase of a small portion (about one-eighth of the whole), although a charming poem which will always, on its own merits, retain its place in English literature, is so exceedingly loose, and often indeed so extravagantly wide of the mark, that it affords practically no idea of the original; and the other translations which exist, whilst a little more exact, are wholly destitute of the poetical charm which makes the earlier version, with all its shortcomings, dear to the lover of poetry. The remarkable personality of the old Persian poet has everything to gain by a sincere and straightforward presentation of the work by which he is best known; and Mr. Payne's version,—whilst giving to the English public for the first time some 300 or 400 quatrains omitted by previous translators, in addition to those already dealt with (*i.e.*, in all about 840, or seventy per cent. more than any other version,)—will endeavour, by a system of metrical reproduction,

representative of the exceedingly characteristic and varied scheme of rhyme and rhythm of the original, combined with the utmost possible fidelity in the matter of sense and diction, to present Khayyam to English readers in some sort as he may be supposed to have appeared to his own countrymen; in a word, to allow him for the first time to speak for himself and to show himself in his habit as he lived. Despite the colossal difficulties involved in the execution of this scheme, it is believed that the present translation will be found far more literal than any other and that, notwithstanding the many remarkable successes already achieved by Mr. Payne (who is now generally allowed to be without a rival in the art of translation), his version of "The Quatrains of Omar Khayyam" will take rank as his masterpiece.

The work (the complete MS. of which is now in the printer's hands) will be issued by subscription in the usual way and will form a handsome octavo volume, finely printed on hand-made paper and bound in vellum gilt, to range with "The Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night." The issue will be seven hundred and fifty numbered copies, of which seventy-five will be on large paper. The price will be for ordinary copies One Guinea (£1 1 0), and for large paper copies Two Guineas (£2 2 0), *both payable in advance*, and subscriptions can now be sent (order form annexed) to the Hon. Sec. :

ALFRED FORMAN, Esq.

49, Comeragh Road,

West Kensington, W.

ORDER FORM.

Please send me Cop on ordinary paper,
at One Guinea, and Large paper Cop at
Two Guineas, of "THE QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYAM,"
in payment for which I enclose for £

TO ALFRED FORMAN, Esq.,

49, Comeragh Road, West Kensington, W.